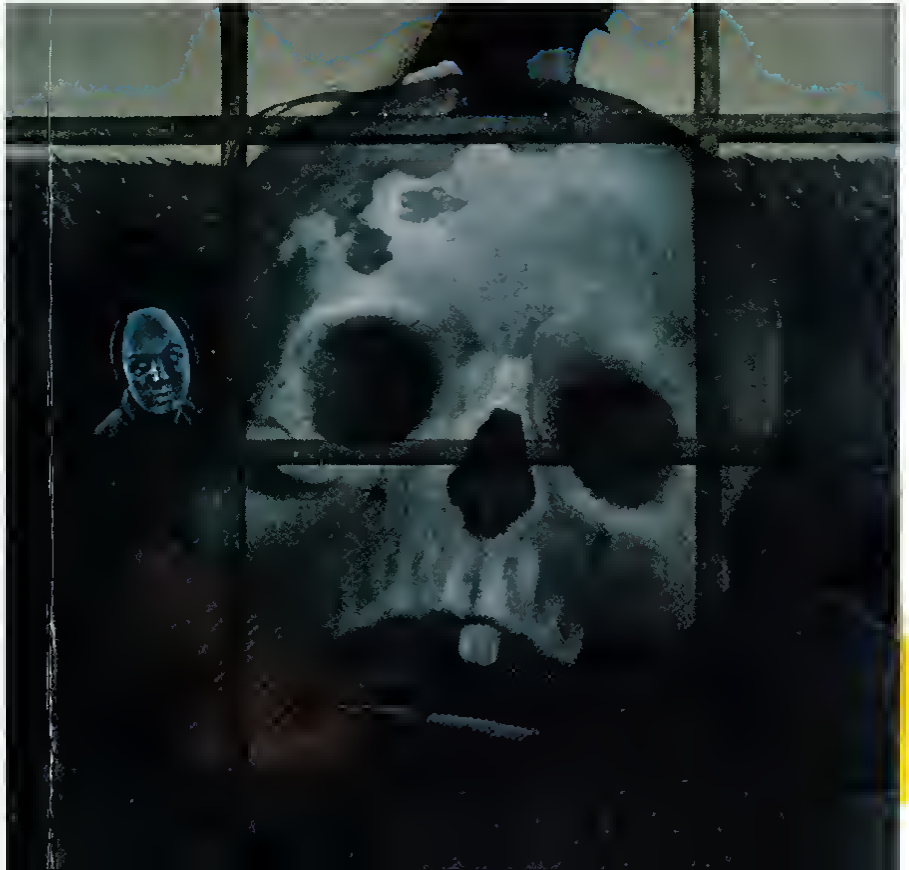
佐武と市捕物控 3

―芒―

石森章太郎

SHOGAKUKAN BUNKO



■「市やん、こいつァ　どうも匂うぜ」佐武の十八番がはじまった。殺しの現場に残された、たった一つの手がかりを、追って、追って、追いつづけ、謎を解き、下手人を捕える佐武と市との名推理。

■人の、心の裏に隠された、悲しみ、苦しみを、絶妙な画風で描き出す江戸人情話。

デザイン　玉井ヒロテル
カバー装画　角田純男

佐武と市捕物控 3
石森章太郎

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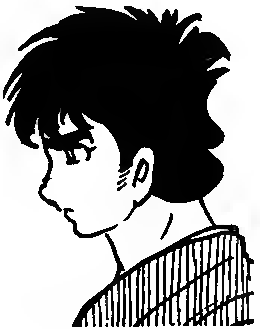
Shogakukan Bunkos
Sabu and Ichi's
Detective Stories
Volume 3
By Shotaro Ishinomori



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Sabu and Ichi's Detective Stories Volume 3 Contents

Chapter 11: Silver Grass
Chapter 12: Festival of Time
Chapter 13: Bettara Market
Chapter 14: Path of the North Wind
Chapter 15: Trap of Ice

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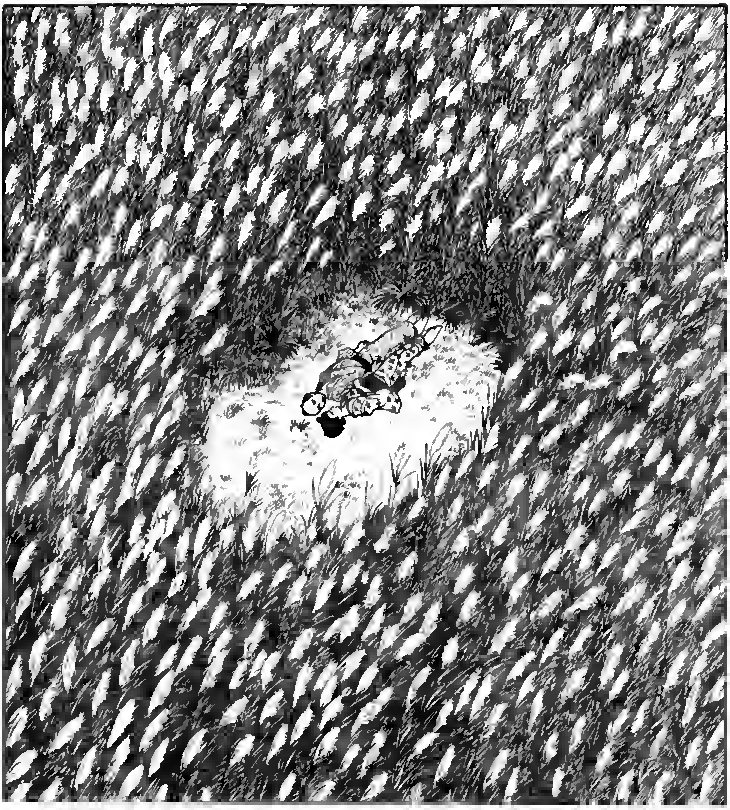
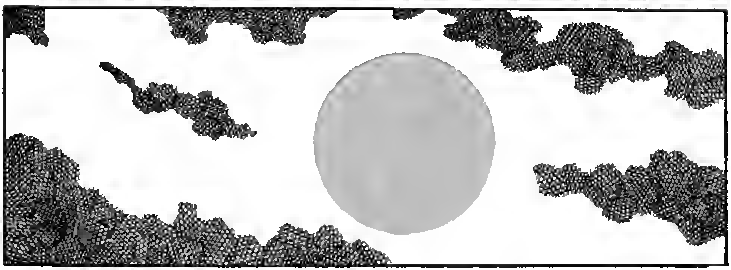
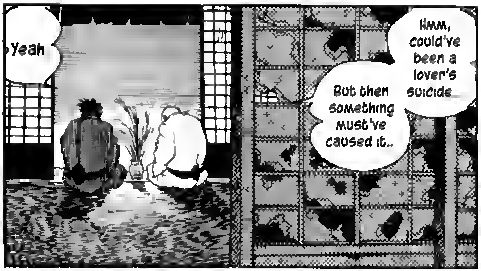
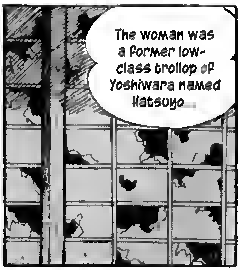
Chapter 11: Silver Grass

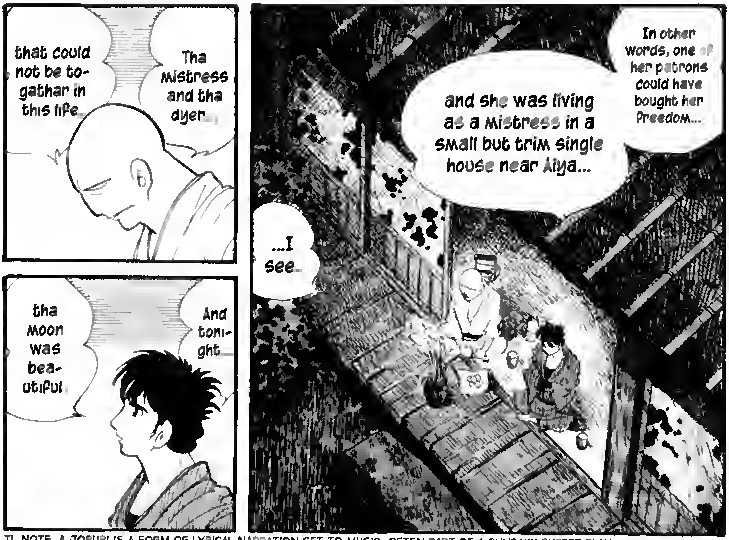




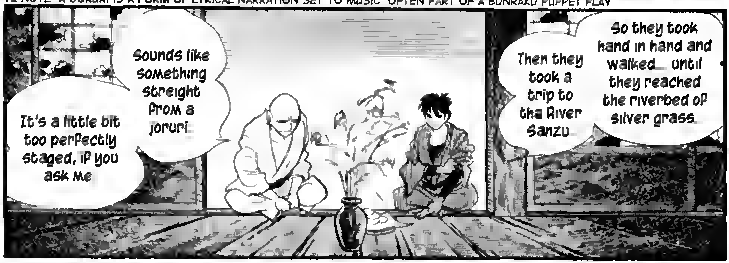
...The man was named Kingo. He was an artisan from a dyer's named Aiya just off Eitai Bridge.

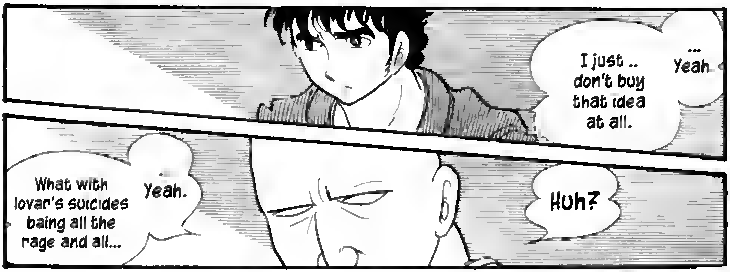

Yeah
Hmm, could've been a lover's suicide...
But then something must've caused it...


The woman was a former low-class trollop of Yoshiwara named Natsuyo...


that could not be together in this life...
Tha Mistress and tha dyer...
tha moon was beautiful!
And tonight...
...I see...
and she was living as a Mistress in a small but trim single house near Aiya...
In other words, one of her patrons could have bought her freedom...

TL NOTE: A JORURI IS A FORM OF LYRICAL NARRATION SET TO MUSIC, OFTEN PART OF A BUNRAKU PUPPET PLAY


It's a little bit too perfectly staged, if you ask me
Sounds like something straight from a joruri
Then they took a trip to tha River Sanzu
So they took hand in hand and walked... until they reached the riverbed of silver grass



It's all straight from "The Love Suicides at Kesene-Izutsu"...
Man, oh, man, did we ever get something bizarre from those Kyotoites...
TL NOTE: A FAMOUS JORURI WRITTEN BY CHIKAMATSU MONZAEMON IN THE EARLY 1700S
I gotta say, these joruri plays have a bad influence on people.
And all cause of that, there've been morons popping up killing each other, so they can pretend they're the stars...
For Kataoka the dyer, and let the Some River cry at this tale."
"As the rumors of this couple have become the plot of this domestic drama, then let us Feel something
That's not why I don't like this
That's not it. Ichi. No,
Oh?
The woman was stabbed by a dagger in the stomach and throat, but the man had drunk poison!!
I can't figure out how it was a lover's suicide.
But on top of that,
Well.. The setup being too perfect is one thing.
So they usually choose the same means of death..
Most of these lover's suicides... are the result of people falling desperately in love...
Oh, in that case... You're right, I can't figure that out...
A forced lover's suicide !?
Which would make this ..

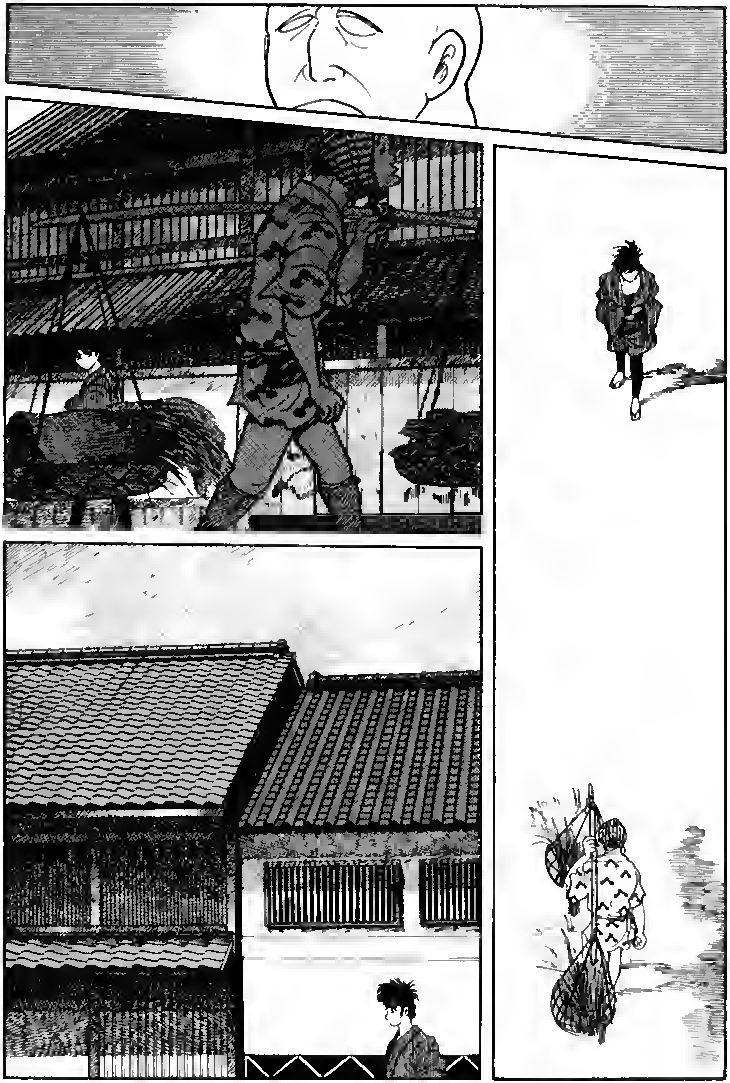
No signs of blood being washed, either.
On top of that, there isn't any blood around..
HMM.
So I guess, then,
it's just an ordinary lover's suicide...
just with a bit of a different style of death?

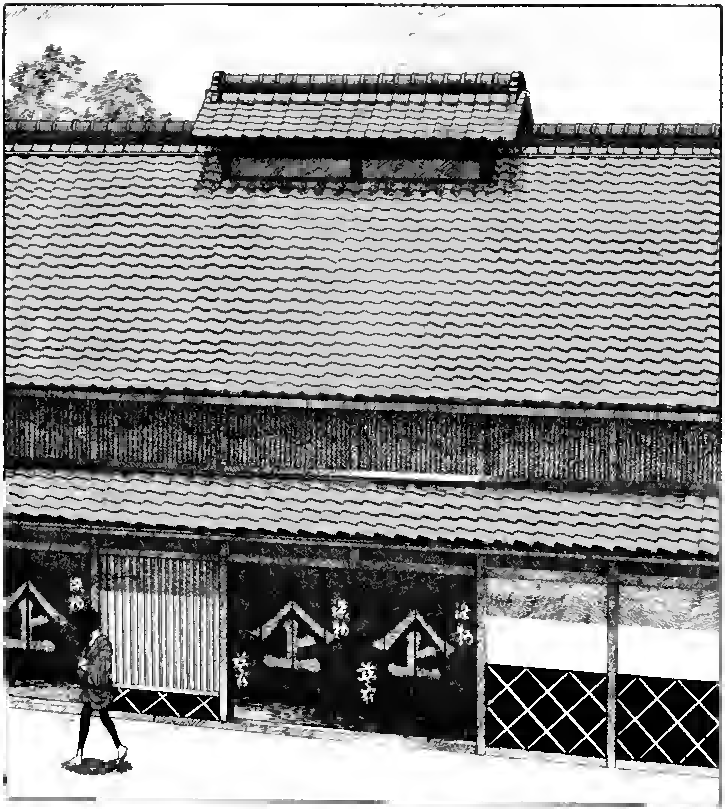
That .. artisan from the dyer's... what was his name again?
Ah, yes. Kingo.
Kingo must've gone mad with his immoral lust ..
I thought of that too.
But the corpses' legs are tightly bound. . The deaths had propriety. even more than for an act...

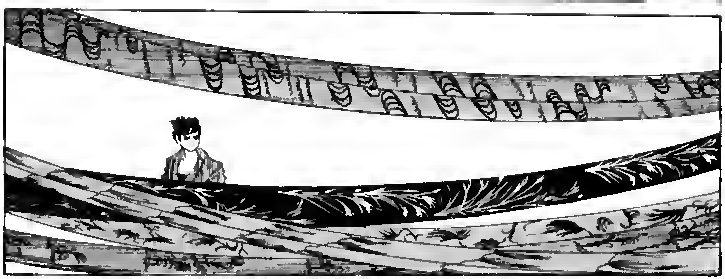
Hold your horses.
There's one more thing I don't like.
W-What is that, Sabu?
You're so mischievous.
Why don't you just say everything all at once?
...The bloody dagger we believe was used to kill the woman was in Kingo's right hand...
That's all Pair
But... When I opened the tight grip of his right hand...
there was a cut and of an ear of silver grass.
Huh?
What's so strange about that?
They died in a field of silver grass... He could've grabbed some in agony...
But there's no silver grass with indigo ears in this field!
Indigo ...!?
God-dam-mit!
I've heard enough of your lecture, Sabu!
Don't keep leading me on like that!
Heh-he..
That's just what happens when I arrange my thoughts while I talk.

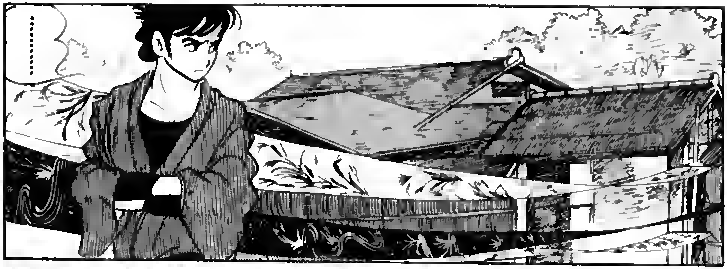
But that aside, you're...
Wait! ...Hey!
...Wasn't the man an artisan from a dyer's?
Heh.. hehe..
That means... it wouldn't be a stretch to say that he had some indigo dye in his palm.
He drank the poison.
He grabbed an ear of silver grass in his agony
His cold sweat made the indigo dye in his palm run.
And that dyed the ear...!
That can't be.
A dyer wouldn't have dyes on his hands.
Those people...
always keep their hands clean.
They can't mix the colors, after all..
Urrgh..
Have it your way.
Ugh!
Whoa

Ga-aah!
You can't be eating spicy dumplings, Ichi!
Eh.. hehe-hehe..
Hehe..
to sniff around a little more.
I suppose we're gonna have...
Sabu,
..Indigo silver grass... eh?
That's what I thought, too, so let's get going.
Yeah

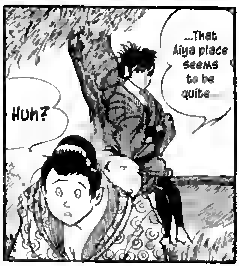


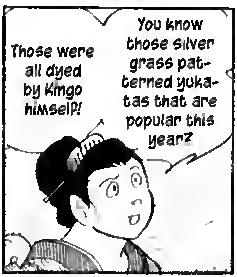


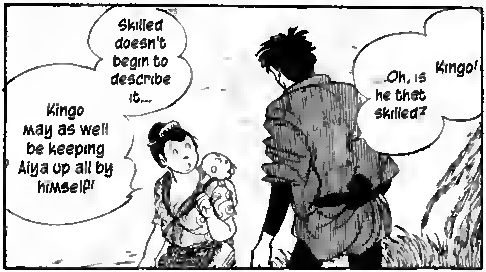



.....

Oh, I was saying that that Aiya place seems to be quite booming with business...
There's a really skilled artisan by the name of Kingo there...
Ah, yes.
Well, of course.


...That Aiya place seems to be quite...
Huh?

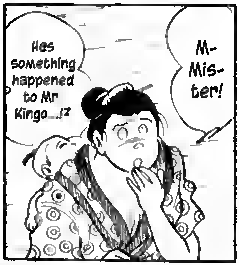

You know those silver grass patterned yukatas that are popular this year?
Those were all dyed by Kingo himself?!


Skilled doesn't begin to describe it...
Kingo may as well be keeping Aiya up all by himself!
Kingo!
...Oh, is he that skilled?

From what I hear, he thought up a new way of dying things!
And Kingo did every little detail all by himself...
The color and pattern are so incredible!
You know, the new ones?
Silver grass pattern-ned...!?
Oh, now that you mention it...
Hm M...
A new way of dying.
and a new design, all by him-self...!
Gone...? Then I guess that means... Mr. Kingo's leaving Aiya after all?
Huh?
Then... If Mr. Kingo were gone, then it would be curtains for Aiya, wouldn't it?
W-Who are you, exactly ..!?
Y-Yes, but...
Has this happened before ..!?
Leaving after all..!?
Huh !?

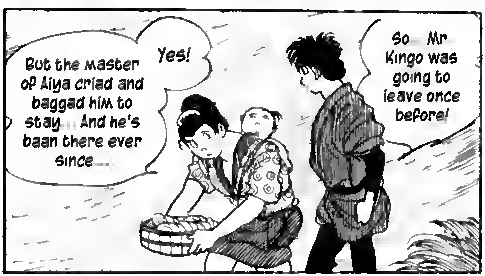
He... died last night.
...So I'm in the middle of investigating him right now...
Would you mind telling me more... about him leaving Aiya...?
Yes...
But I gotta warn you, this is quite an old rumor...

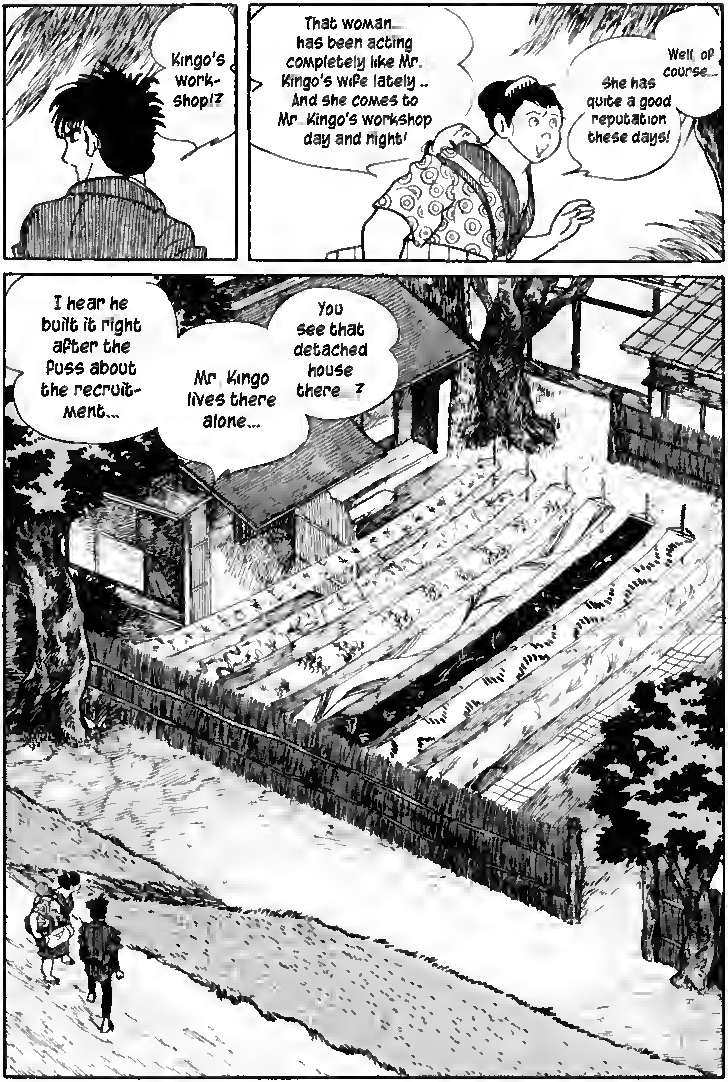
Uh-... Uhh,
Wait! you saa...

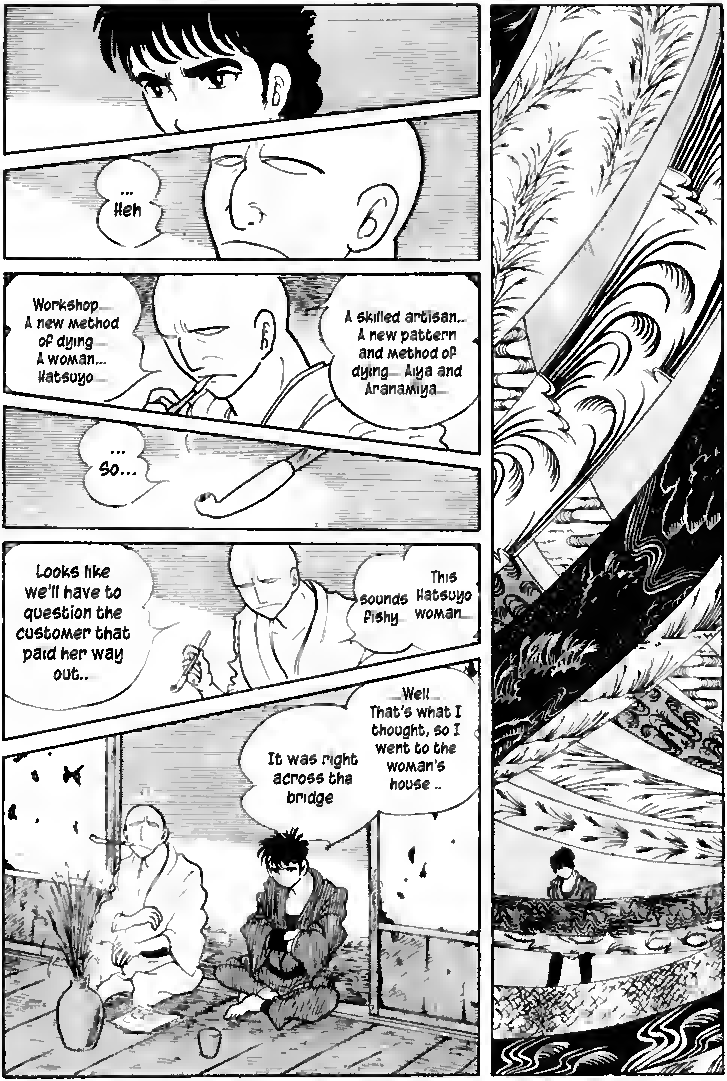

M-Mister!
Has something happened to Mr Kingo...!?

You haard of Aranamiya...? Thay're tha biggest dyer's store in all of Edo.
And I hear someone from there came by to recruit Mr Kingo once...
Apparently they got their hands on one of Mr. Kingo's patterns... and Aiya was starting to get more and more business...
So from Aranamiya's perspective.. you know..?

Hmm
So... What of the woman named Katsuyo who used to be from Yoshiwara...?

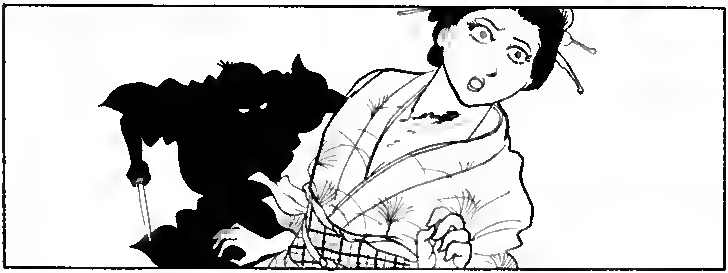

So... Mr Kingo was going to leave once before!
Yes!
But the master of Aiya cried and baggad him to stay... And he's been there ever since...

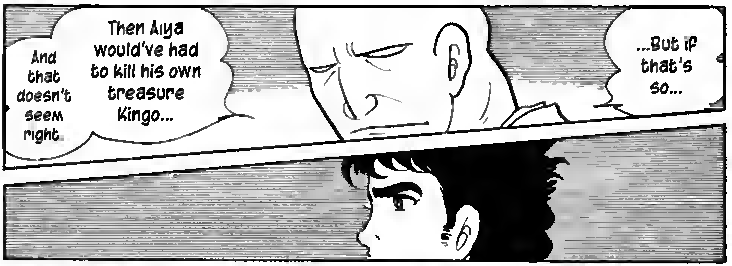

Kingo's workshop!?
That woman... has been acting completely like Mr. Kingo's wife lately.. And she comes to Mr. Kingo's workshop day and night!
Well, of course...
She has quite a good reputation these days!
You see that detached house there...?
Mr. Kingo lives there alone...
I hear he built it right after the fuss about the recruitment...


... Heh
Workshop... A new method of dying... A woman... Hatsuyo...
A skilled artisan... A new pattern and method of dying... Aiya and Aranamiya...
... So...
Looks like we'll have to question the customer that paid her way out..
This Hatsuyo woman... sounds fishy...
Well... That's what I thought, so I went to the woman's house...
It was right across the bridge

...Hatsuyo
Hatsuyo!
I-I'm...
..Y-Yes, but... Who are you...!?
Are you ..
...the owner of Aranamiya?
Huh!?
I knew it!
That means you were the one who paid for Hatsuyo's freedom, Mr. Aranamiya!
But judging by how you were just calling for Hatsuyo.
You must not know that Hatsuyo has passed away ..
W-What was that!?

Do you have any idea of who it might've been...?
W-was murdered!?
Huh? H-Hatsuyo...
That means... That you must not be Hatsuyo's murderer...
because you wanted to pull Kingo over to your store, didn't you?
But when Aiya noticed that she was about to succeed...
T-That's right!!
It's him! Aiya killed Hatsuyo!
...
After you bought Hatsuyo's freedom, you made her get close to Kingo...
...Mr. Arana-Miya.

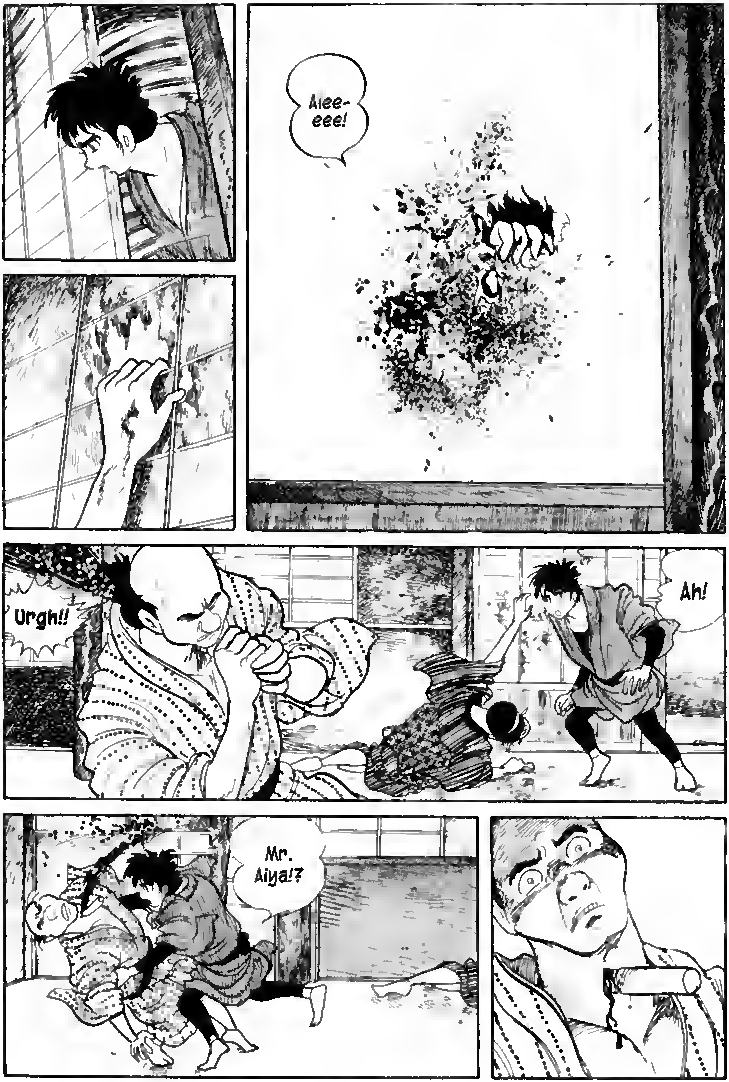


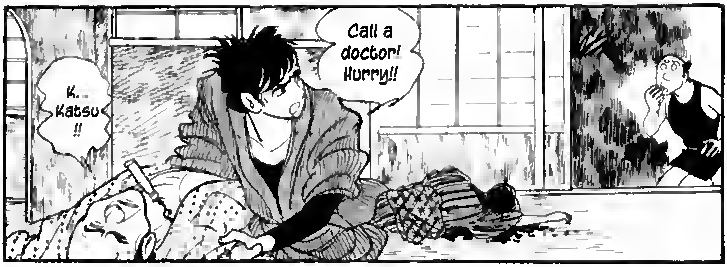

...But if that's so...
Then Aiya would've had to kill his own treasure Kingo...
And that doesn't seem right.

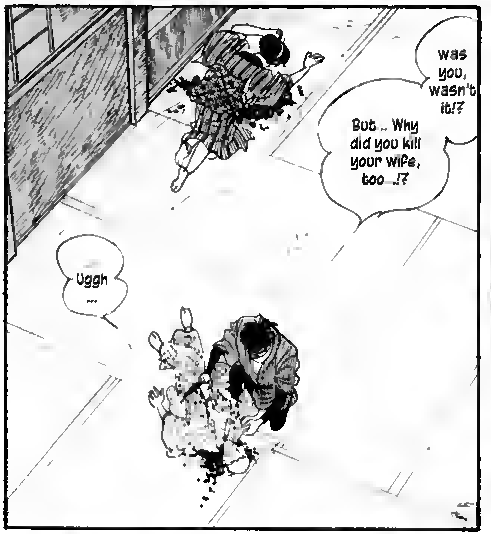
Excuse Me.
I'd like to have a word with the manager...

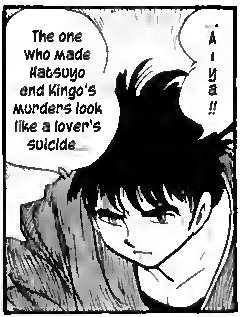
Yes, who might you be ...?

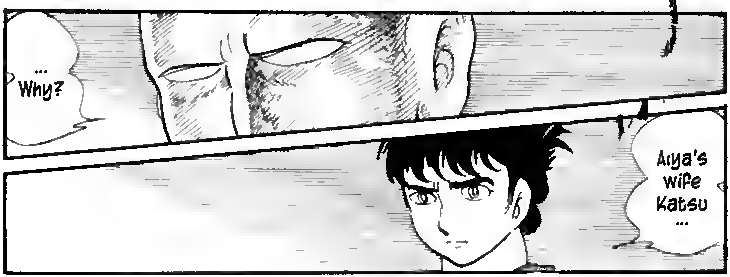
I-I'm sure he was just over by Mr. Kingo's workshop..


Aiee-eee!
Urgh!!
Ah!
Mr. Aiya!?

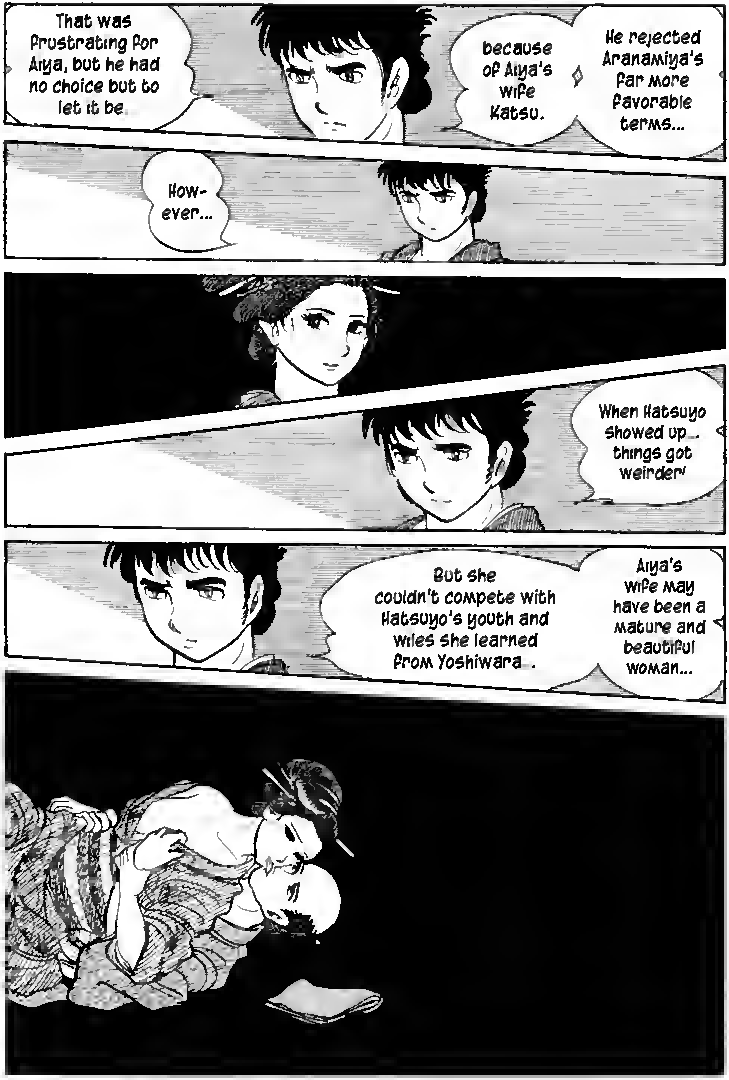

K... Katsu !!
Call a doctor! Hurry!!

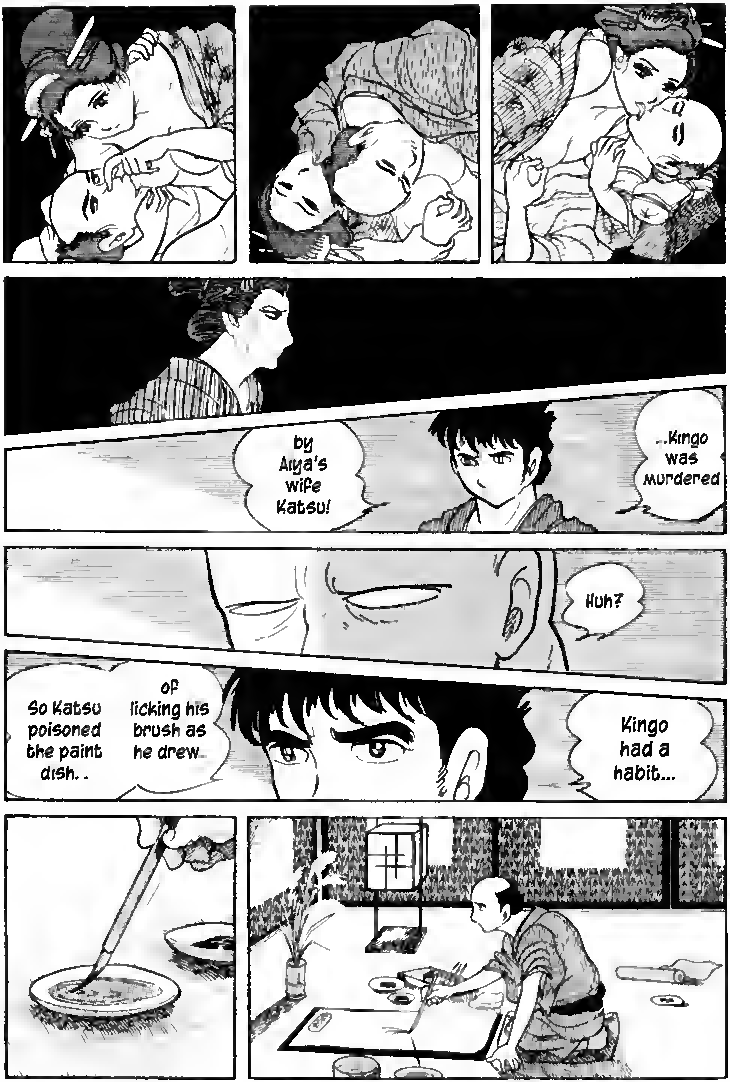

Was you, wasn't it!?
But ... Why did you kill your wife, too ..!?
Uggh ...


... A i y a !!
The one who made Katsuyo and Kingo's murders look like a lover's suicide...

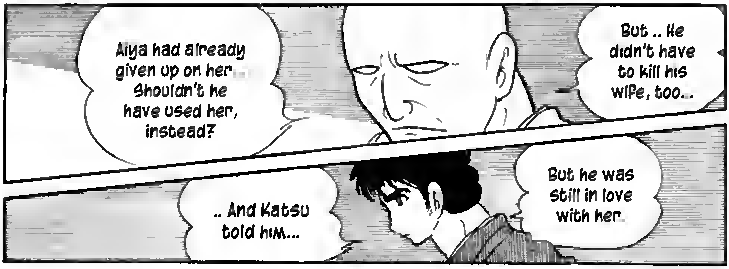

... Why?
Aiya's wife Katsu ...

was sleeping with Kingo.
...But he pretended not to notice!
Aiya had caught wind of their affair.
And Kingo took advantage of that.
After all, Kingo was still a master artisan.
Especially not after the matter with Aranamiya.
He had no other choice.

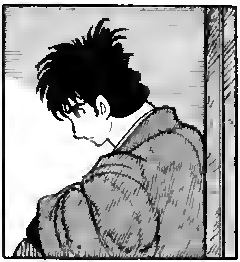

That was frustrating for Aiya, but he had no choice but to let it be.
because of Aiya's wife Katsu.
He rejected Aranamiya's far more favorable terms...
How-ever...
When Hatsuyo showed up... things got weirder!
But she couldn't compete with Hatsuyo's youth and wiles she learned from Yoshiwara...
Aiya's wife may have been a mature and beautiful woman...

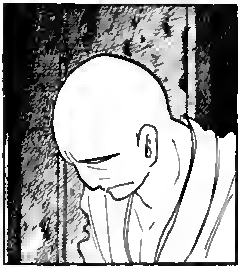

...Kingo was murdered
by Aiya's wife Katsu!
Huh?
Kingo had a habit...
of licking his brush as he drew.
So Katsu poisoned the paint dish..

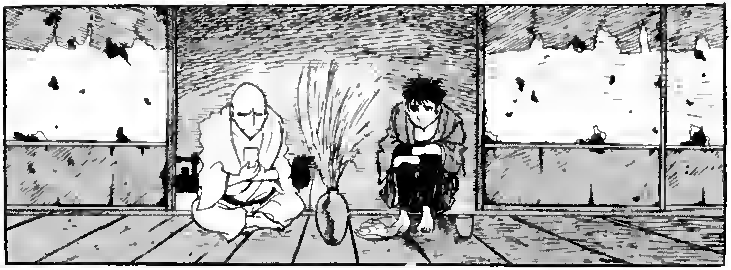
...and Hatsuyo was just unlucky.
She just happened to be sneaking in!
And Aiya, in a panic, stabbed her!
But soon, Aiya returned to his senses...
and began to fret over disposing the bodies...
So he made it seem like a trendy lover's suicide...
...I see!

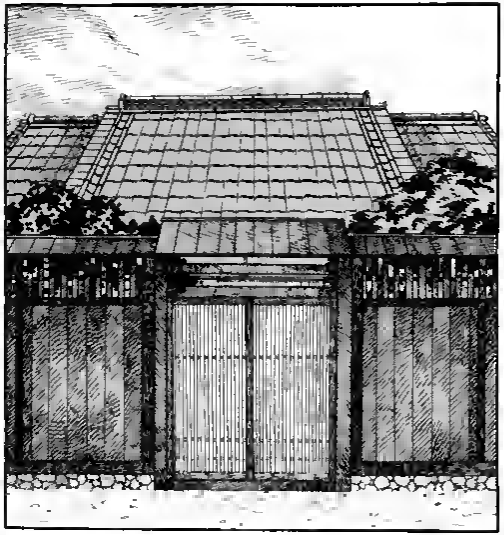

Aiya had already given up on her... Shouldn't he have used her, instead?
But .. He didn't have to kill his wife, too...
.. And Katsu told him...
But he was still in love with her.

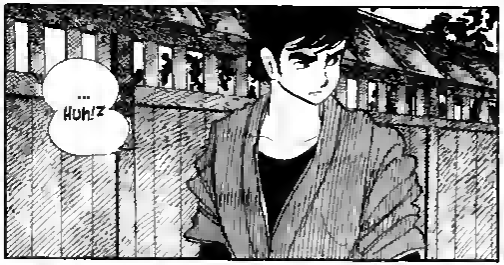
The only reason I killed that man..
was so I could make him mine, and mine alone!
How dare you make Katsuyo and Kingo's deaths look like a lover's suicide!!

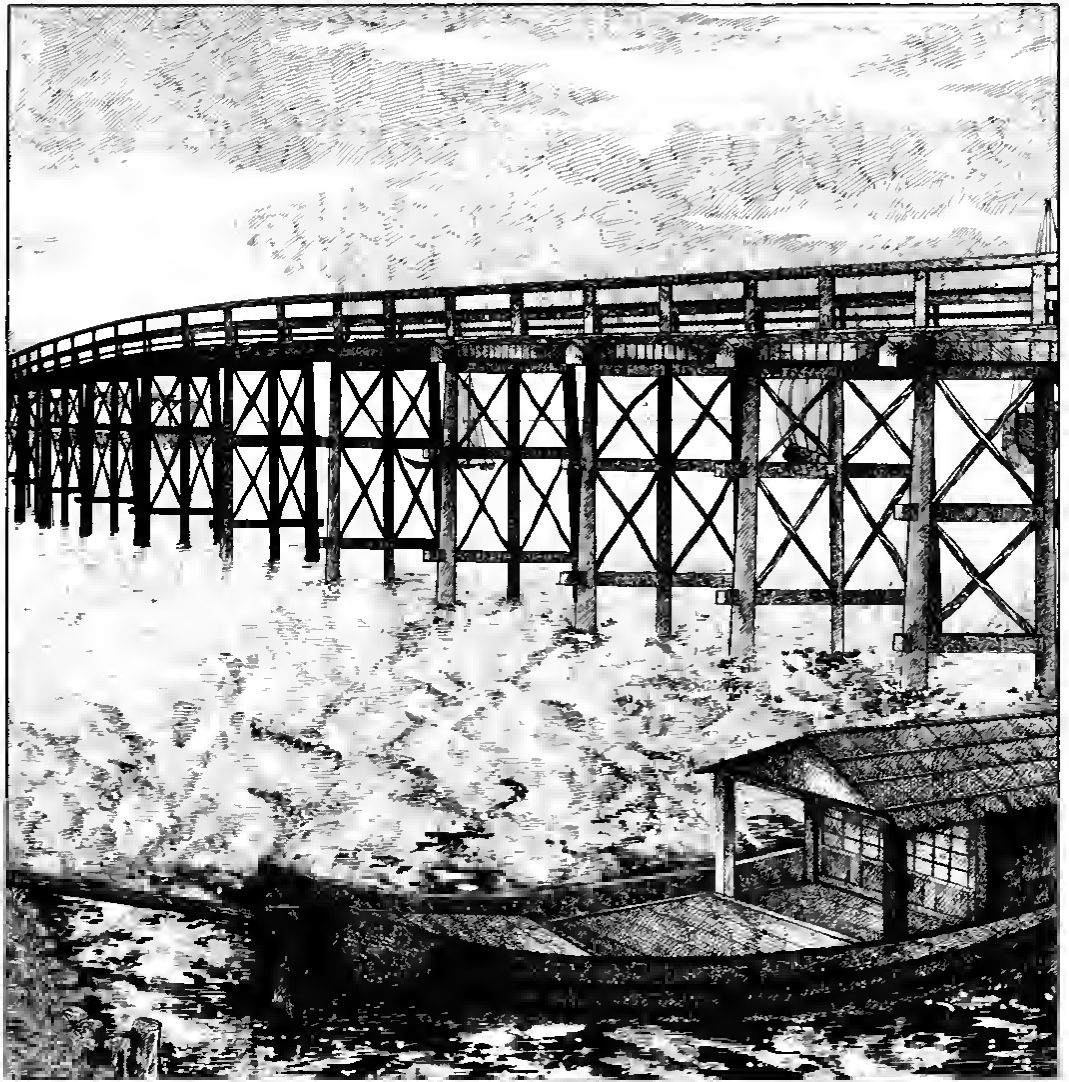









...
Huh!?



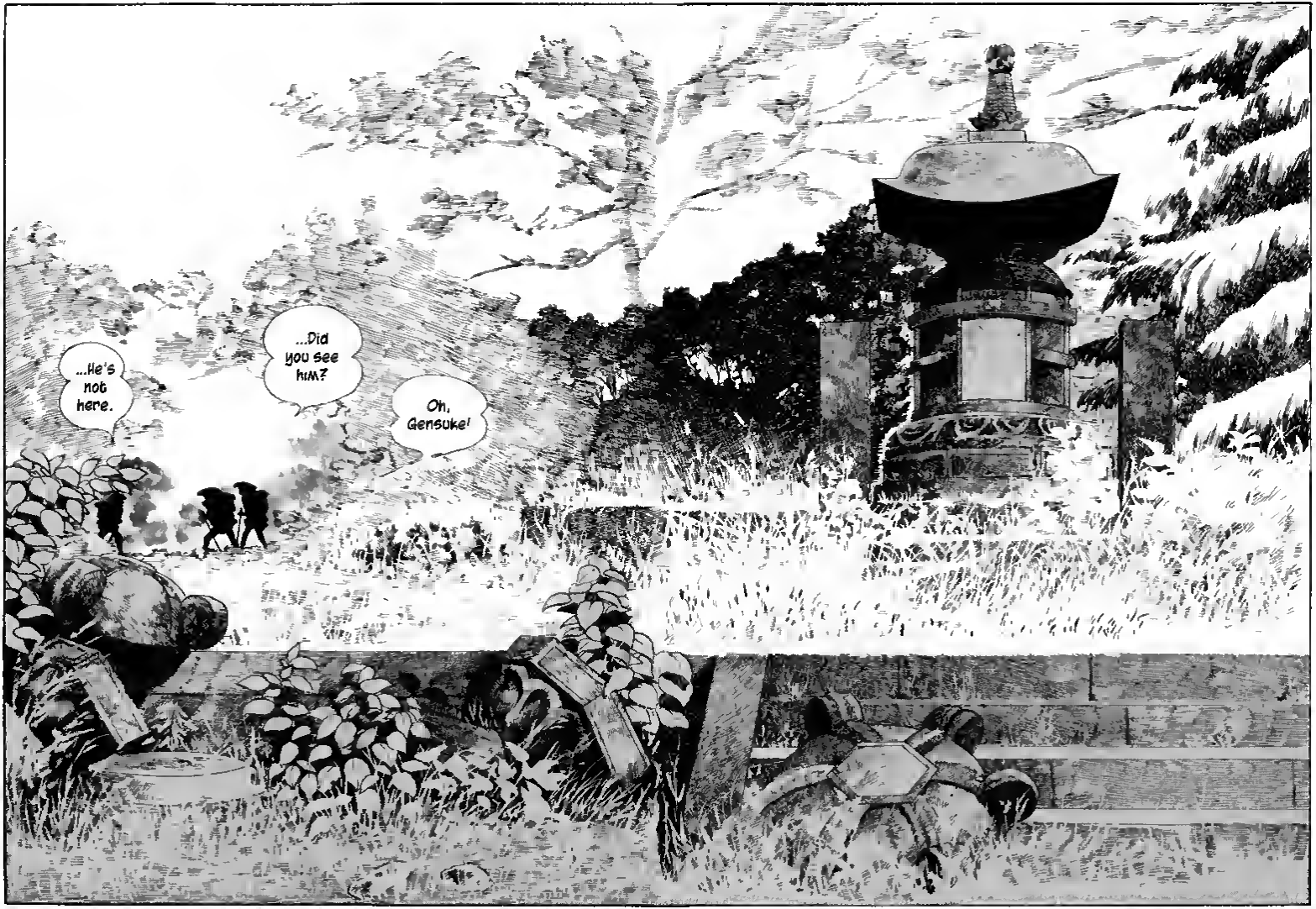
佐武と市捕物控

SABU & ICHI

Chapter 11
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

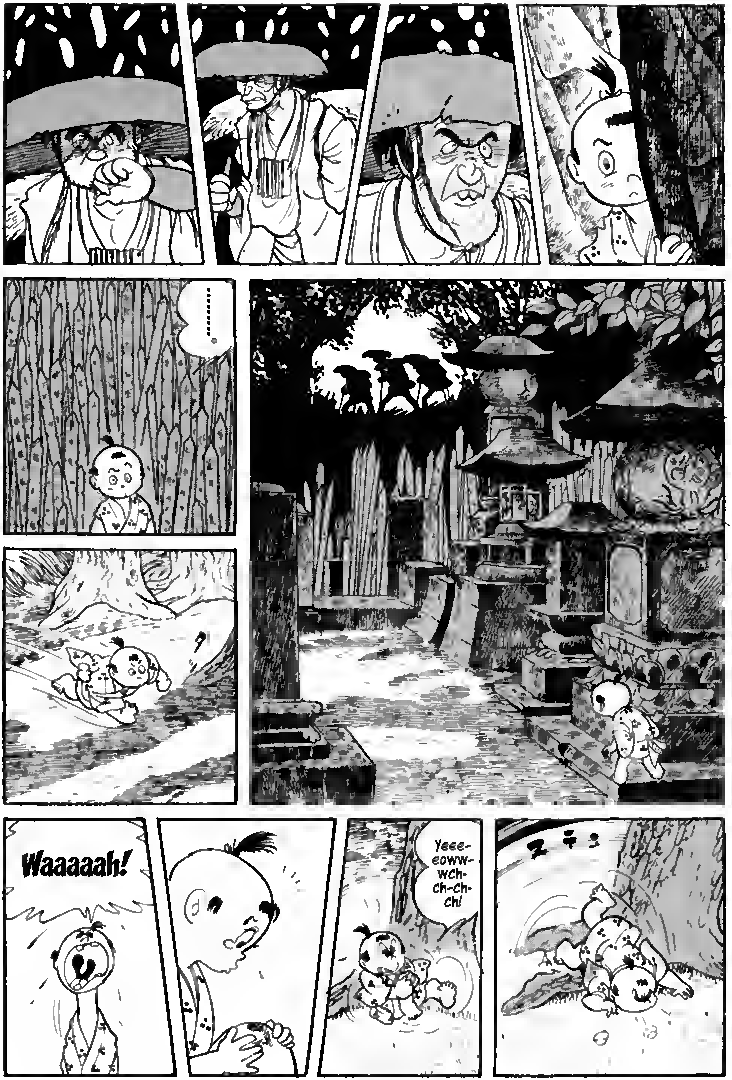
Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

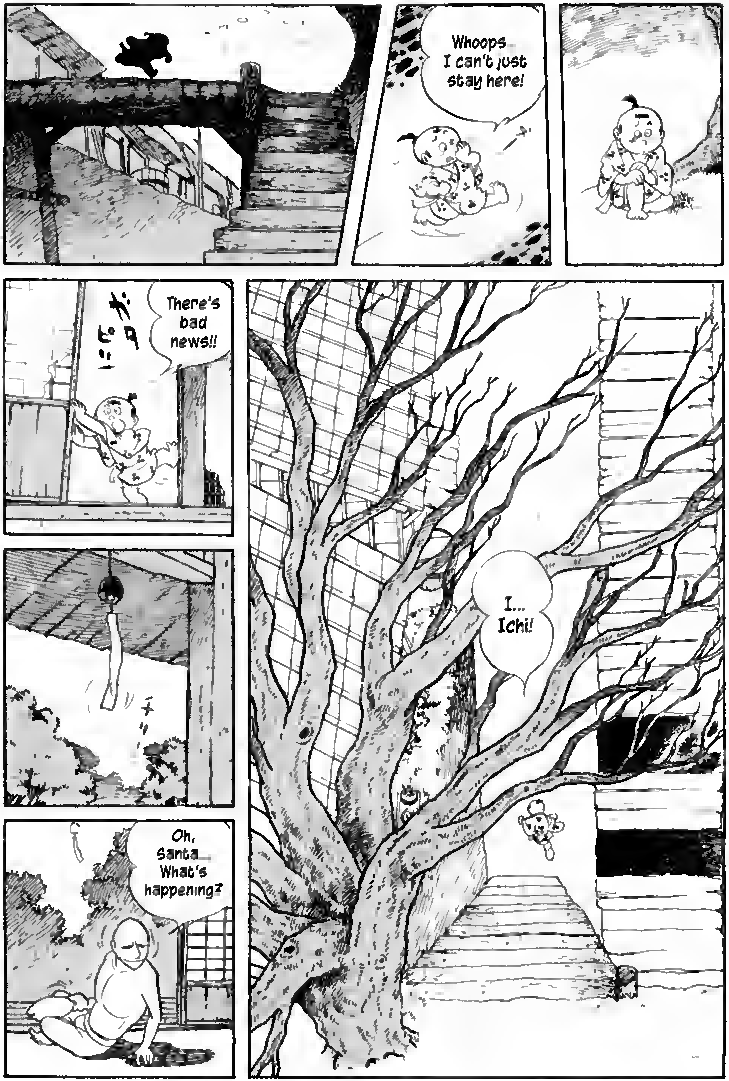
Chapter 12: Festival of Time


...He's not here.
...Did you see him?
Oh, Gensuke!

What?
I heard he went back to his village early this morning!!

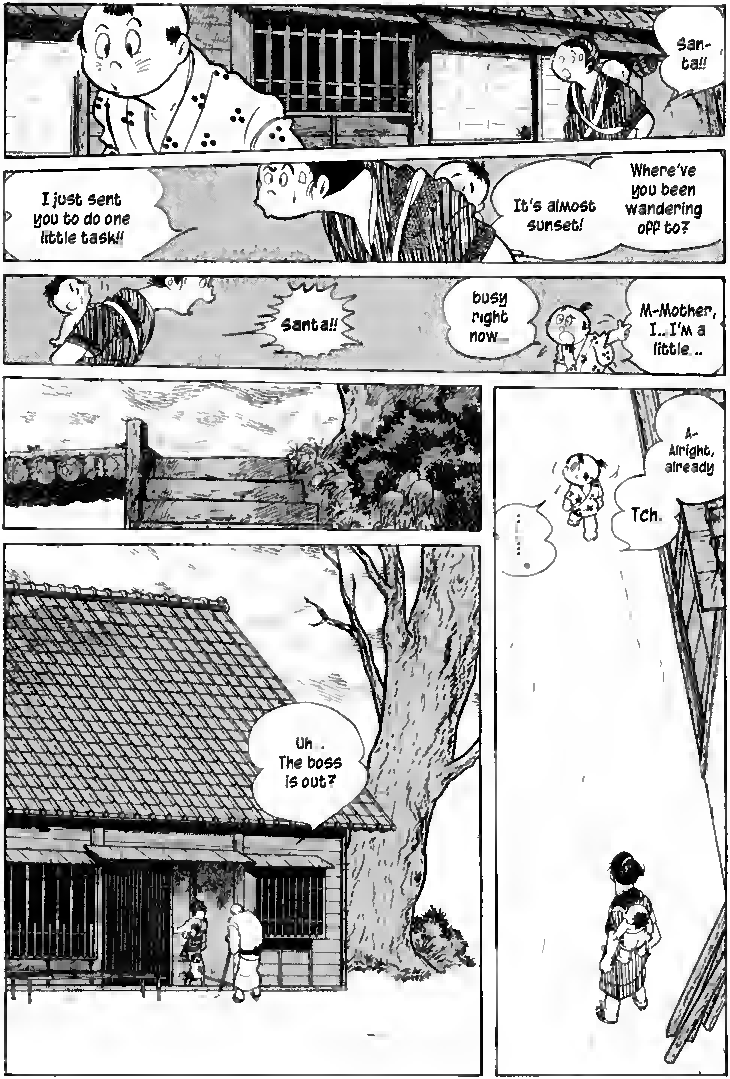
Tch, not again...
...So, where is his village!?


.....
Waaaaah!
Yeee-eowww-wch-ch-ch-ch!


Whoops... I can't just stay here!
There's bad news!!
I... Ichi!
Oh, Santa... What's happening?

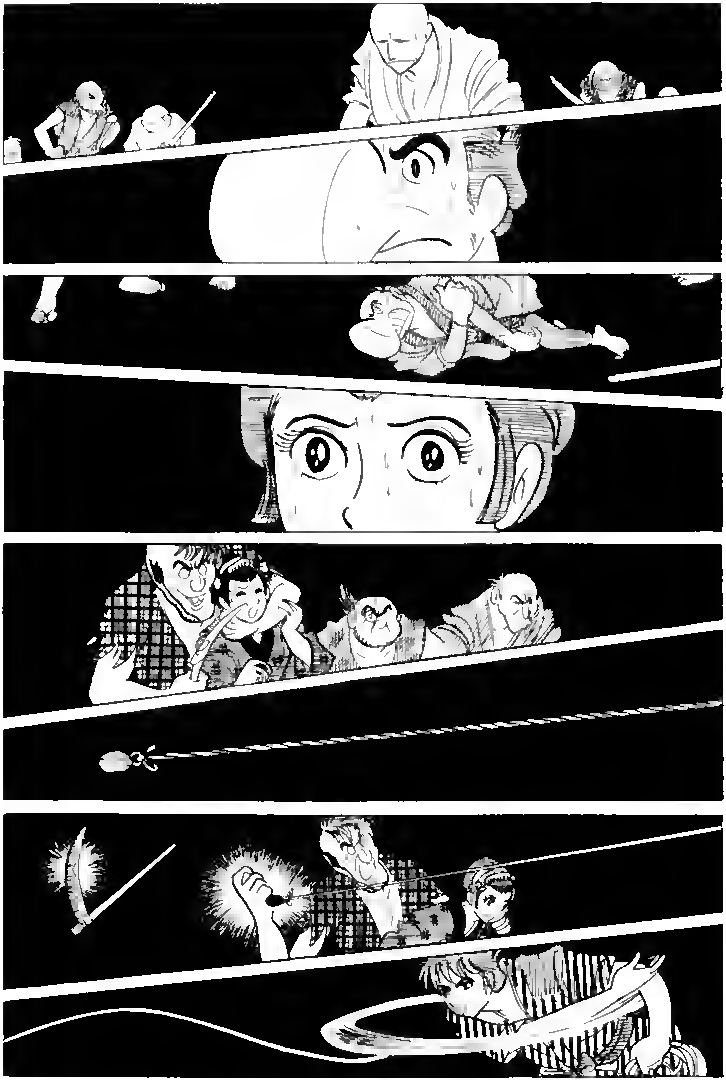
Huh?
Huff, huff, huff... So in other words... Huff huff... and that's what happened...
Ehehe...
And now my throat is dry.
L-Let me have a drink... I've run all the way from Hoei Temple...
You got a knack for leading people along.
You've become quite the storyteller, haven't you?
And there were these three guys that were looking for Bro Sabu!!
J-Just now... I was on the hill behind Hoei Temple...
Yeah.
If you ask me... this seems suspicious
What if
They were all dressed like pilgrims... but they had really menacing faces!
So they decided to go to Kisai Village to follow Bro Sabu... and they left!!
and describe their faces to me!!
Hey now, little Sanny, stop imitating Sabu for a sec...

And one was one-eared... And he had a deep sword along his forehead...
And one was one-eyed!!
Huh? Well, yaah.
Was... one of them blind?
Their faces... You wanna know what they looked like? Well...
Oh, so you know them, Ichi!?
Oh? Then I guess...
To Boss Sahaji's place...
Huh? Ichi?
Where are you going?
Whoa, whoa...
You're sure fast for a blind man.
I knew that this seemed suspicious...


San-ta!!
I just sent you to do one little task!!
It's almost sunset!
Where've you been wandering off to?
Santa!!
busy right now...
M-Mother, I...I'm a little...
A-Alright, already
Tch.
Uh. The boss is out?

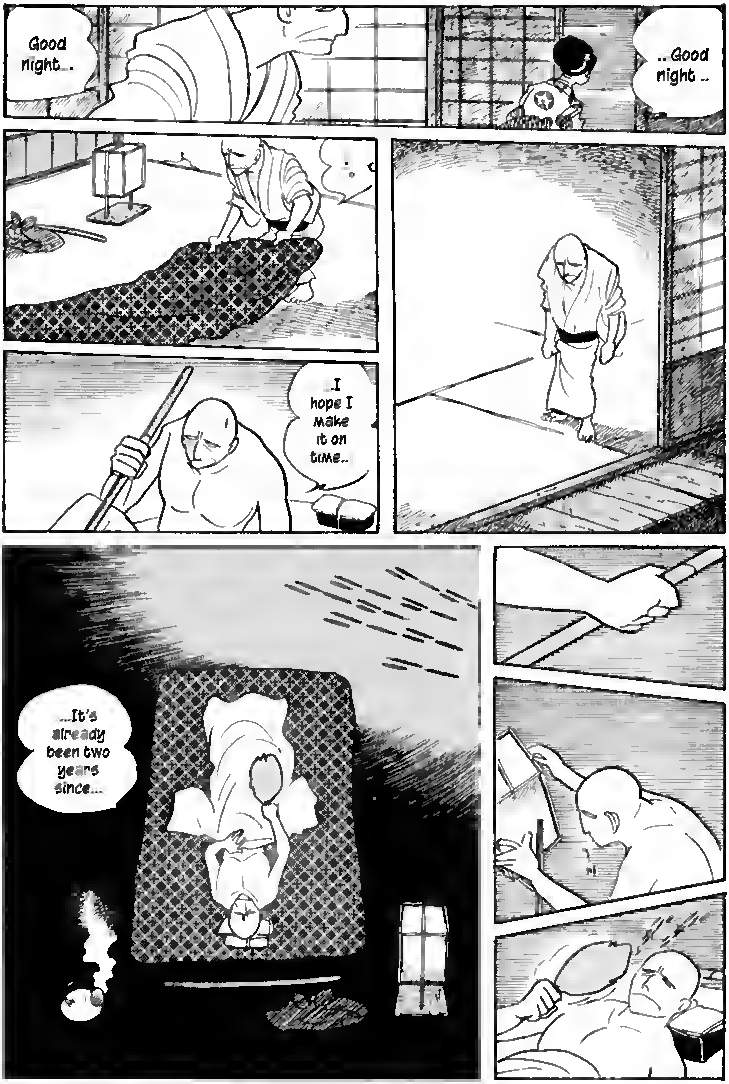
Oh! Teaheahee, speak of the devil!
I don't know, I thought he should've been back by now...
So.. Did he say when he was coming back?
Hey, Ichi!
Mr. Tanaba ...!?
Constable Tanaba called him in to go to tha Kitamachi Magistrate's office
I guess gouts are a mixed blessing! Once the summer-time comes, he gets so active...
Hmm...
What did Mr Tanabe want...?
Boss.
Welcome back
And the rumor said that thay had mada thair way into Edo... So Mr. Tanaba was worried, and gave me the order...
They ware sent from Denma Town to Ojima, and thay escaped tha island not evan sevan days ago!!
I'm sure you remember those threa men from the Demon Path Group...
...Ichi, there's baan an escape

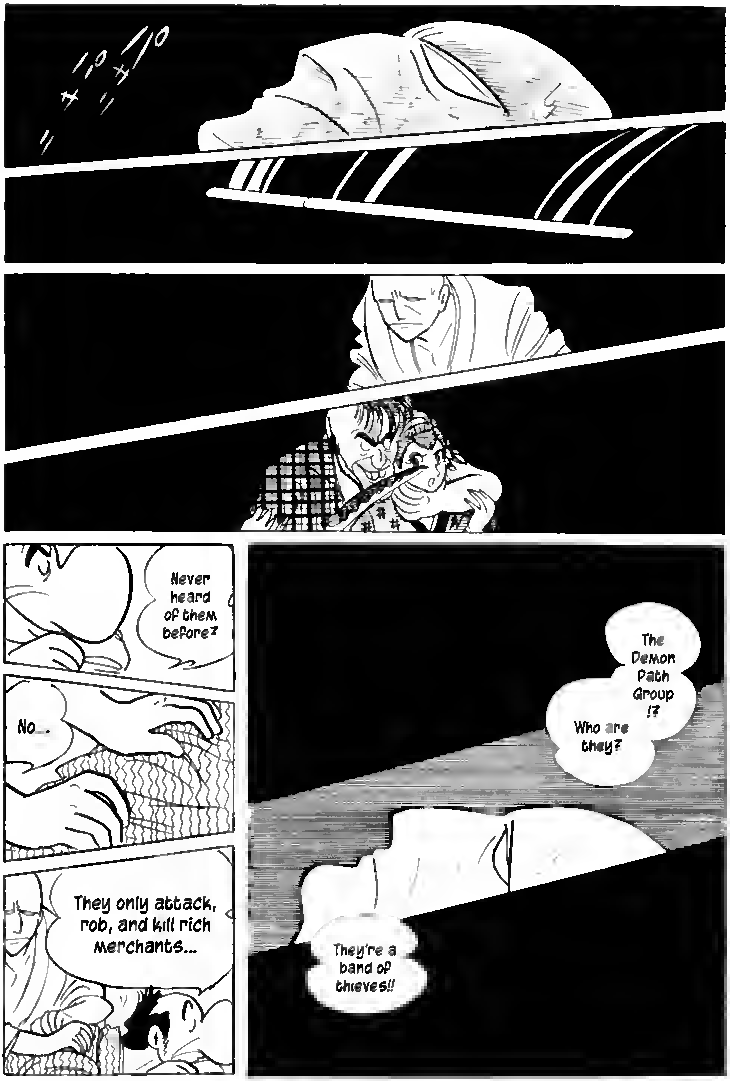
Hehhe.. But lucky for him, Sabu's just left Edo.. !!
...My!
to tell Sabu to be careful..
After all, they may as well have been Sabu's first arrest.. And it's quite possible that they harbor a grudge against Sabu!!
You could end up wrapped up in this. Watch your back.
Boss... We're too late.
Ichi.
to pursue Sabu...!!
Those three have already left Edo...
What was that!?
Huh!?

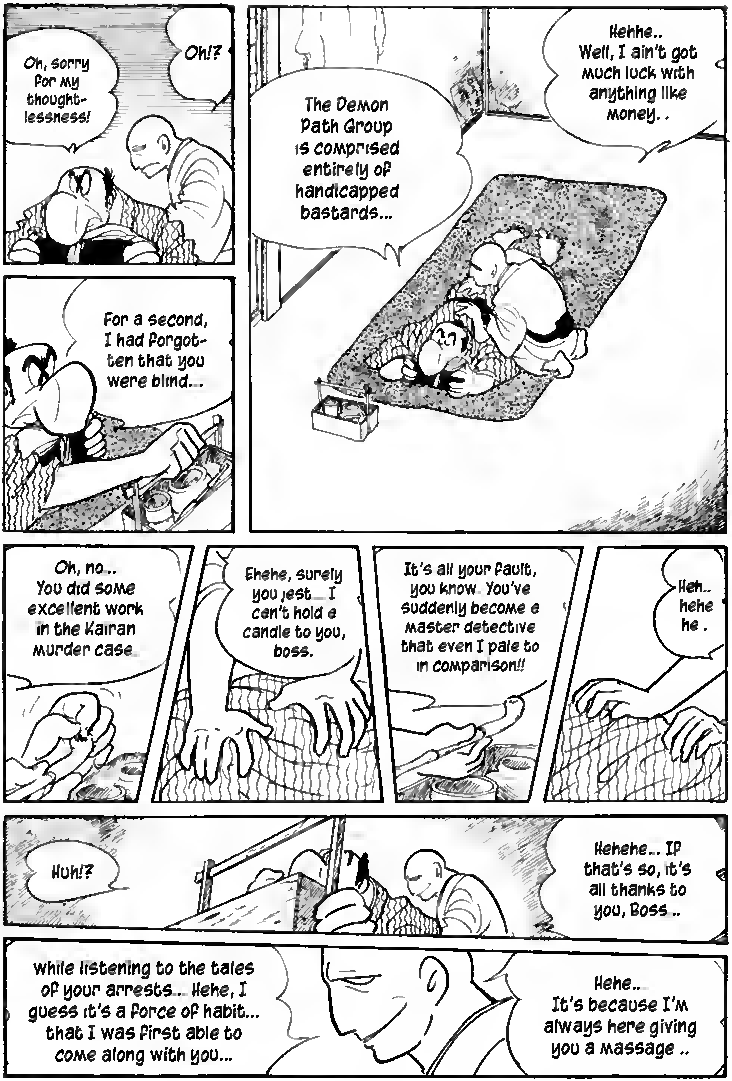


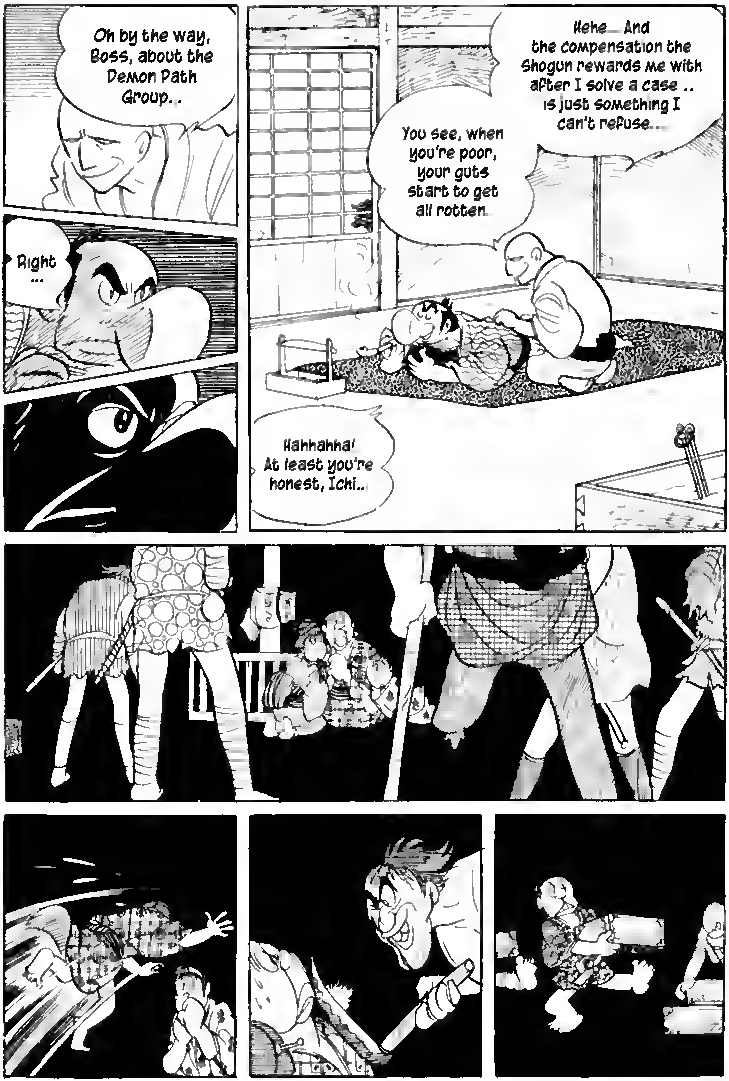
...Boss, I'm on my way to find Babu.
.....
I have to go and tell him to be careful as soon as I can...

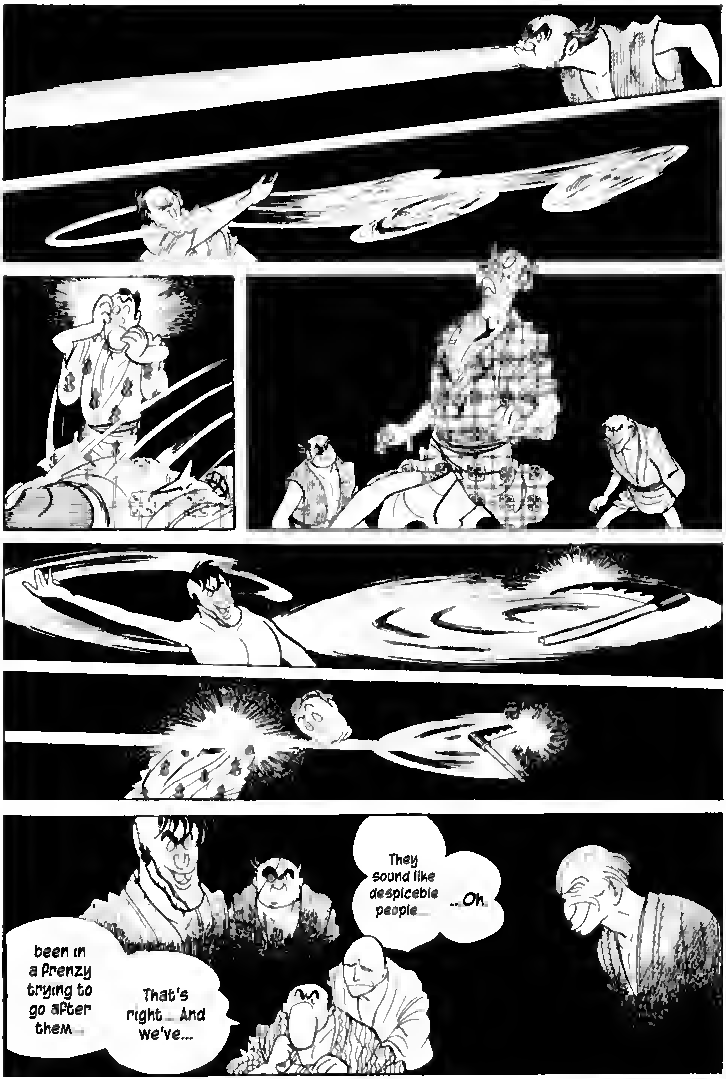
Sorry to make you do this...
Thank you
Here, Ichi... This has everything you'll need.
Summer's almost over, isn't it?
Ichi...
I must get my rest, I'll be leaving early tomorrow...
Now... then,
Heh, he... Don't worry, he'll be fine, if I go as fast as I can...
I know... Midori...


Good night...
..Good night ..
..I hope I make it on time..
...It's already been two years since...

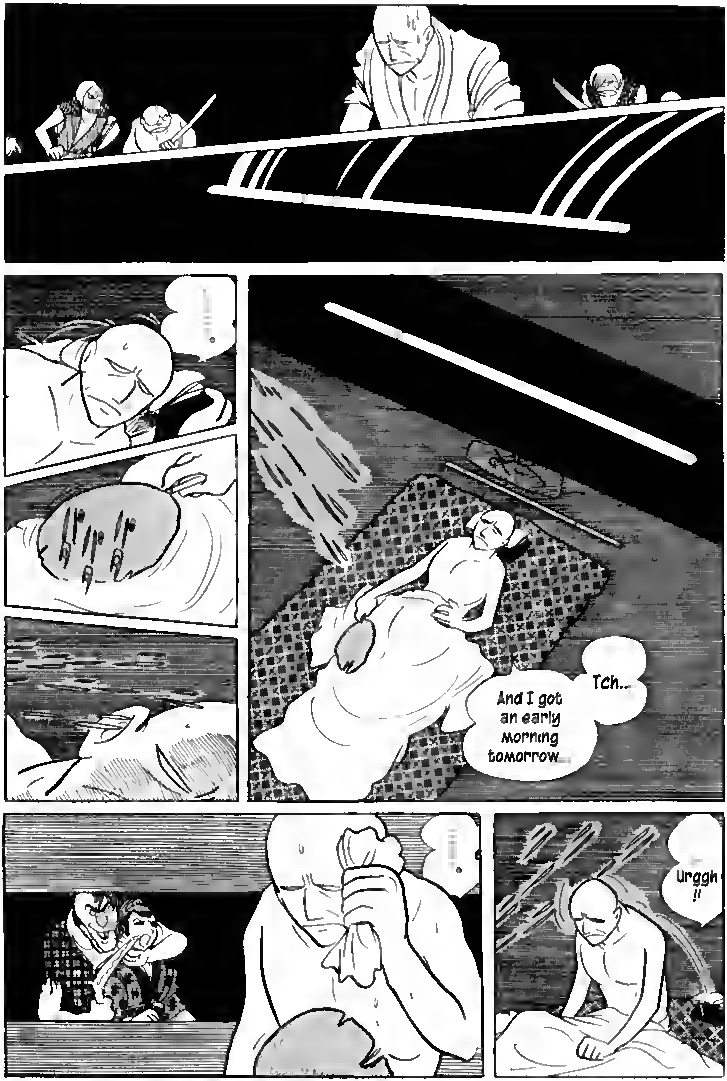

Never heard of them before?
No...
They only attack, rob, and kill rich merchants...
The Demon Path Group!?
Who are they?
They're a band of thieves!!


Oh!?
Oh, sorry for my thoughtlessness!
Hehhe.. Well, I ain't got much luck with anything like money..
The Demon Path Group is comprised entirely of handicapped bastards...
For a second, I had forgotten that you were blind...
Oh, no... You did some excellent work in the Kairan murder case.
Ehehe, surely you jest... I can't hold a candle to you, boss.
It's all your fault, you know. You've suddenly become a master detective that even I pale to in comparison!!
Heh.. hehe he.
Huh!?
Hehehe... If that's so, it's all thanks to you, Boss..
while listening to the tales of your arrests... Hehe, I guess it's a force of habit... that I was first able to come along with you...
Hehe.. It's because I'm always here giving you a massage..

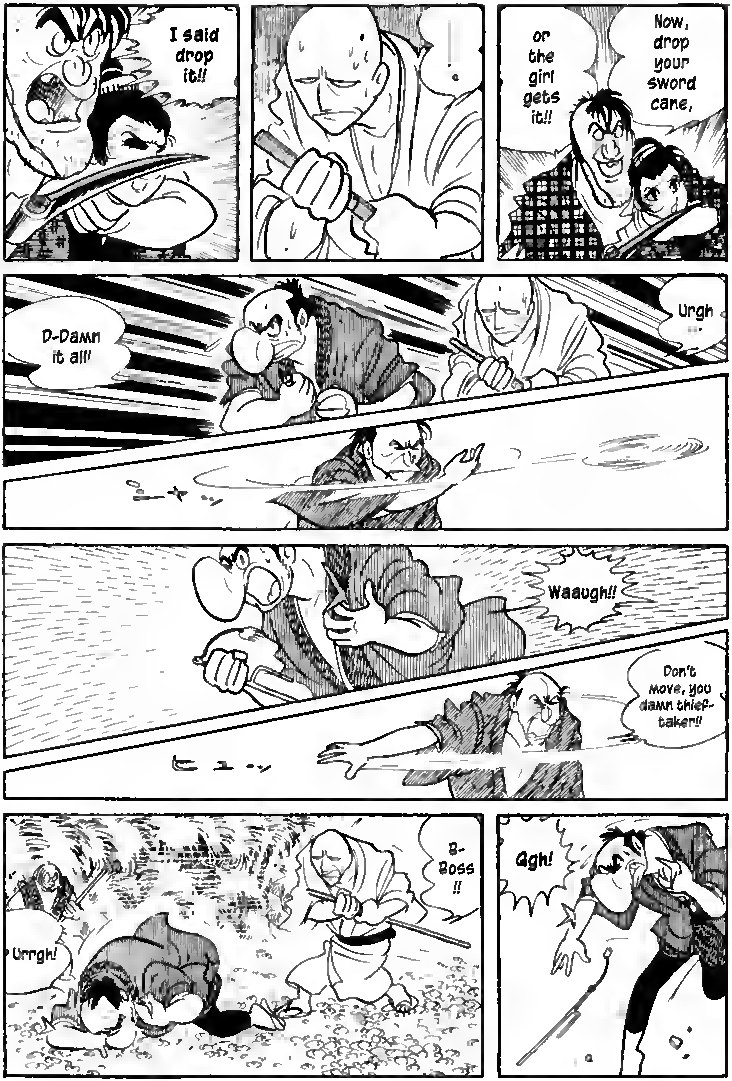

Oh by the way, Boss, about the Demon Path Group..
Right ...
Hehe... And the compensation the Shogun rewards me with after I solve a case .. is just something I can't refuse...
You see, when you're poor, your guts start to get all rotten.
Hahhahha! At least you're honest, Ichi..

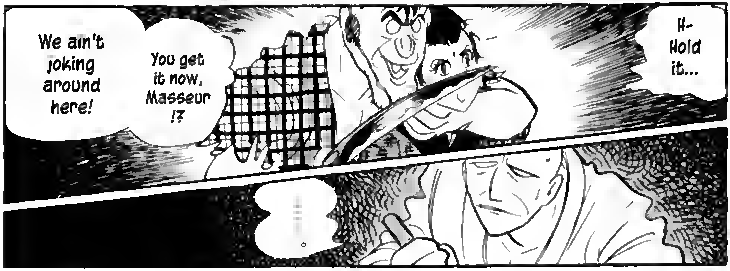

They sound like despicable people...
...Oh.
That's right... And we've...
been in a frenzy trying to go after them...

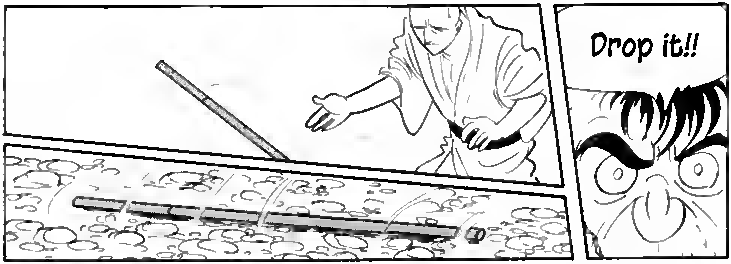
Huh? You found their hideout..!?
..Hehhe, but yesterday, I just happened upon some info..
But we can't quite catch them.
So..Today I'm gonna stake 'em out and get more proof, and once I'm completely sure..
I'll tell my Constable Tanabe first thing tomorrow..
That's right. I've finally caught their tail!!
Hmm?
A letter!?
IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR DAUGHTER AGAIN, COME TO THE HIDEOUT THAT YOU FOUND. BUT COME ALONE. IF YOU TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS, CONSIDER YOUR DAUGHTER DEAD.
M-Midori's been kidnapped!!
Huh!?
By the Demon Path Group!?
..Urk!
W-What's the problem Boss!?

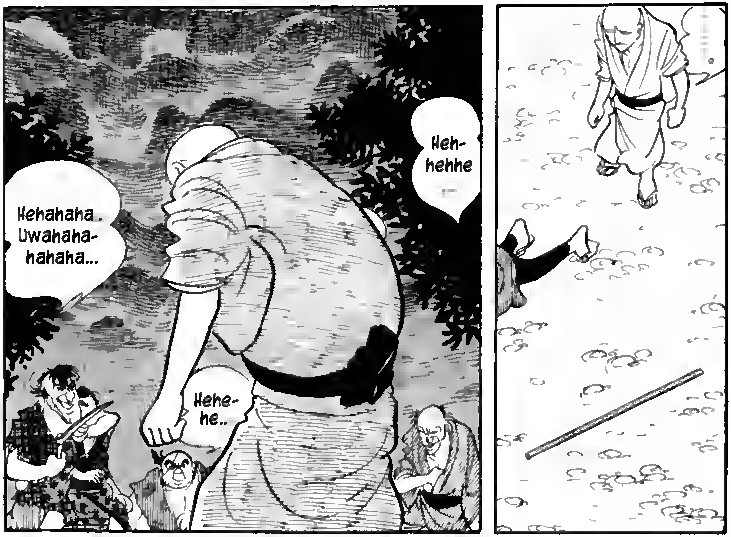

Tch...
And I got an early morning tomorrow...
Urggh !!

Heh-hehhe..
A... Ahhh...
Hey, Masseur I've heard rumors about you.
Hehe-he...
You're the quick-draw master that uses a sword-cane.
But that won't be much use to you here!!
M-Midori!


I said drop it!!
Now, drop your sword cane,
or the girl gets it!!
D-Damn it all!
Urgh
Waaugh!!
Don't move, you damn thief-taker!!
ヒュ…
Urrgh!
B-Boss !!
Ggh!


We ain't joking around here!
You get it now, Masseur !?
H-Hold it...

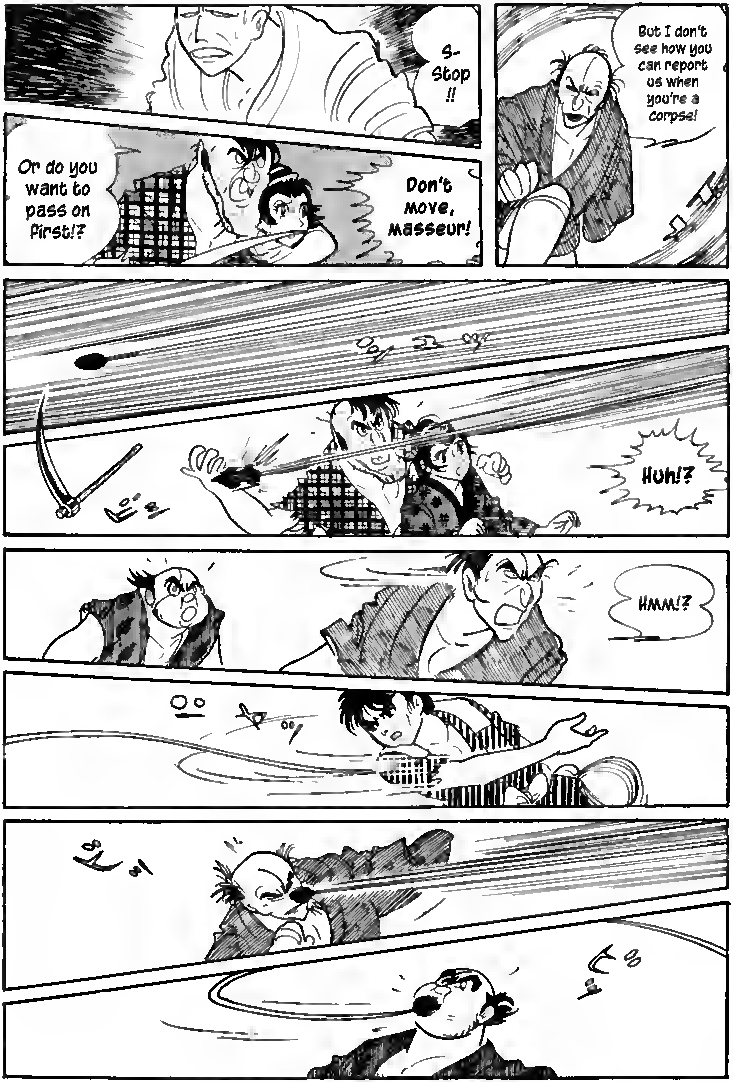

Drop it!!

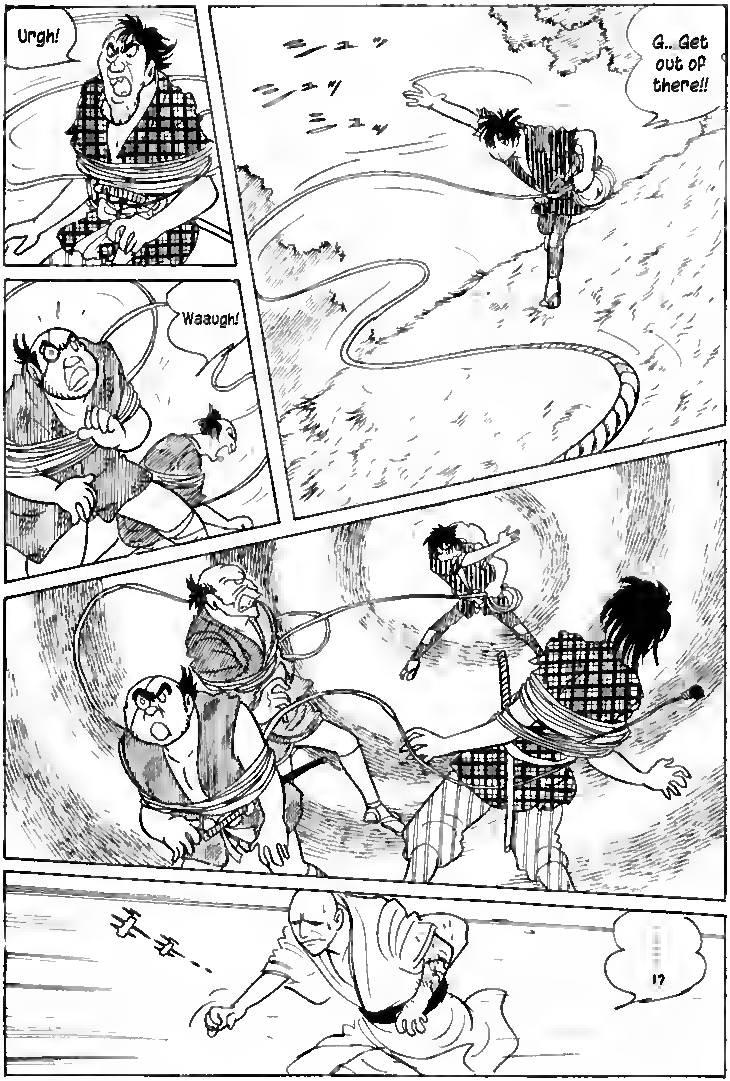

Heh-hehhe
Kehahaha.. Uwahaha-hahaha...
Hehe-he..

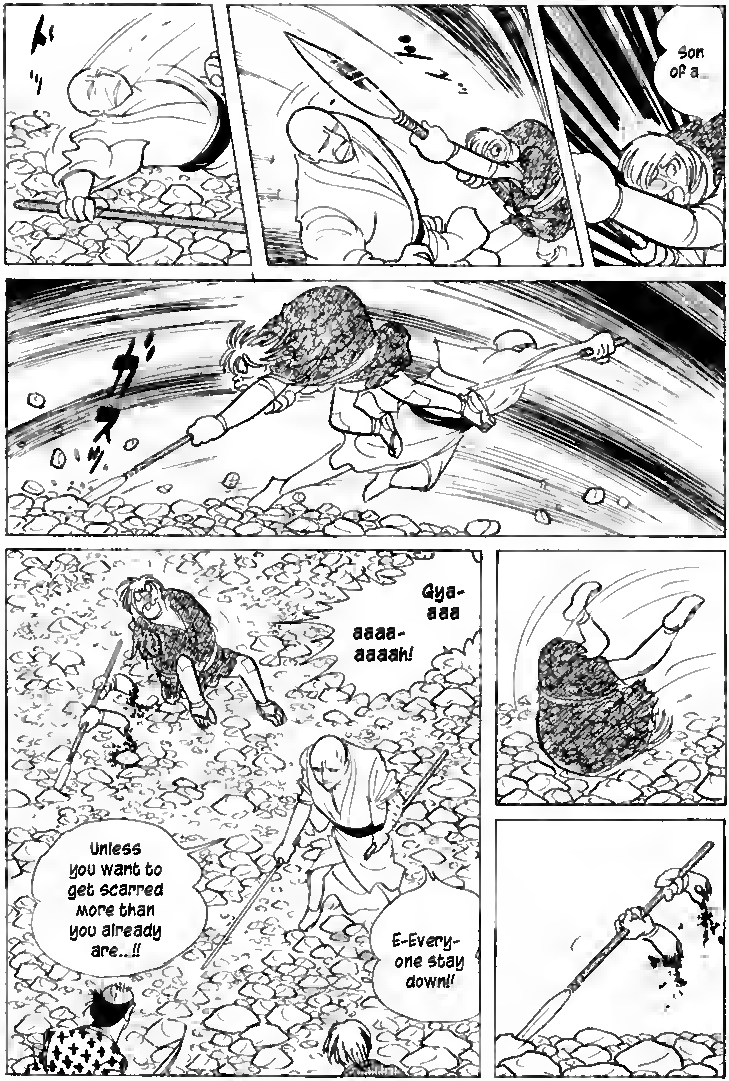
Ah!!
Eheh.. Ehehe...
Ooh...
See, this is what happens to you...
You're.. just like us, ain't you...?
Hehehe... Hey, Masseur...
Urggh
Able-bodied people .. look down on us, ridicule us, and never help us. Ain't that right!?
We handicapped people are all comrades... We gotta help each other out, right!?
when you ally with these able-bodied bastards

I don't know... if you're really as skilled as they say you are.. but you don't see a blind man that can pull of a quick draw every day. Whaddya say?
Wanna join the Demon Path Group?
Well, whaddya say?
You're all just gonna die.
Heh... Of course, if you decline...
Hey! Why don'cha say somethin'!?
Hmpf!
You damn dog of the Shogun!!
I-I don't care what happens to me... But please, at least spare Midori!
P... Please, no!!
and tried to look for our hideout, this wouldn't be happening!
Urrgh
If you hadn't stuck your head where it didn't belong
Pppt!
Argh!

You've made fun of us.. And you've judged us as half-men, and never give us any half-decent jobs!
You are!!
Just so you know, we're not the ones at fault here!!
We steal. . for the same reason that you catch thieves. . We're just working to earn our living!!
We haven't done anything wrong!!
And we divide our money between the misfortunate weak people, like ourselves!
And we only go after.. rich people who use their able bodies to profit off evil!!
Wa-augh!
You can report him or not That's up to you!!
Tch, shut the fuck up!
A-Alright... I won't report you.. t-to the Magistrate..


S-Stop !!
Don't move, masseur!
Or do you want to pass on first!?
But I don't see how you can report us when you're a corpse!
Huh!?
Hmm!?

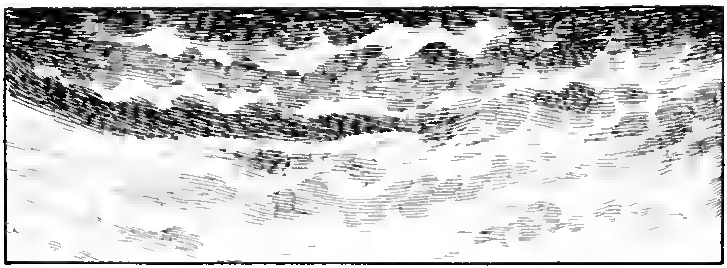

Urgh!
G... Get out of there!!
Waaugh!
!?

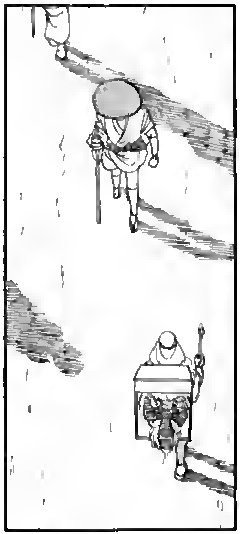

Son of a
Gya-aaa aaaa-aaaah!
Unless you want to get scarred more than you already are..!!
E-Everyone stay down!!

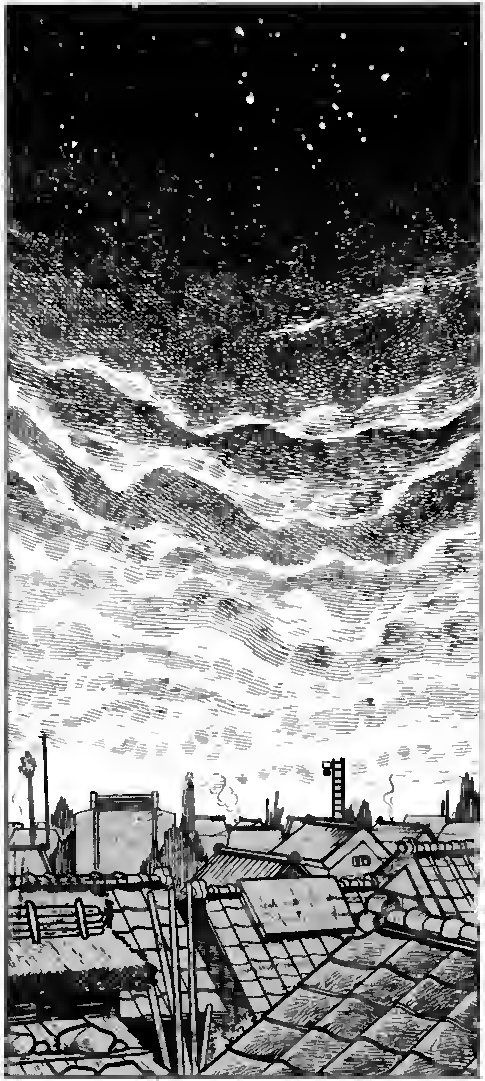
Even your hearts have been twisted!!
You're already scarred more than you should be, aren't you!?
...Talk about giving the devil his due.
Don't even joke!!
It's not wrong to steal or murder..?
Everything you just said was simply sophistry to excuse your evil deeds!!
You're not the only ones!
But don't act spoiled!!
You may be handicapped...
And it is painful! Sometimes I want to make him blind, too!
have been mocked for my blindness more times than I can count!
Even I...

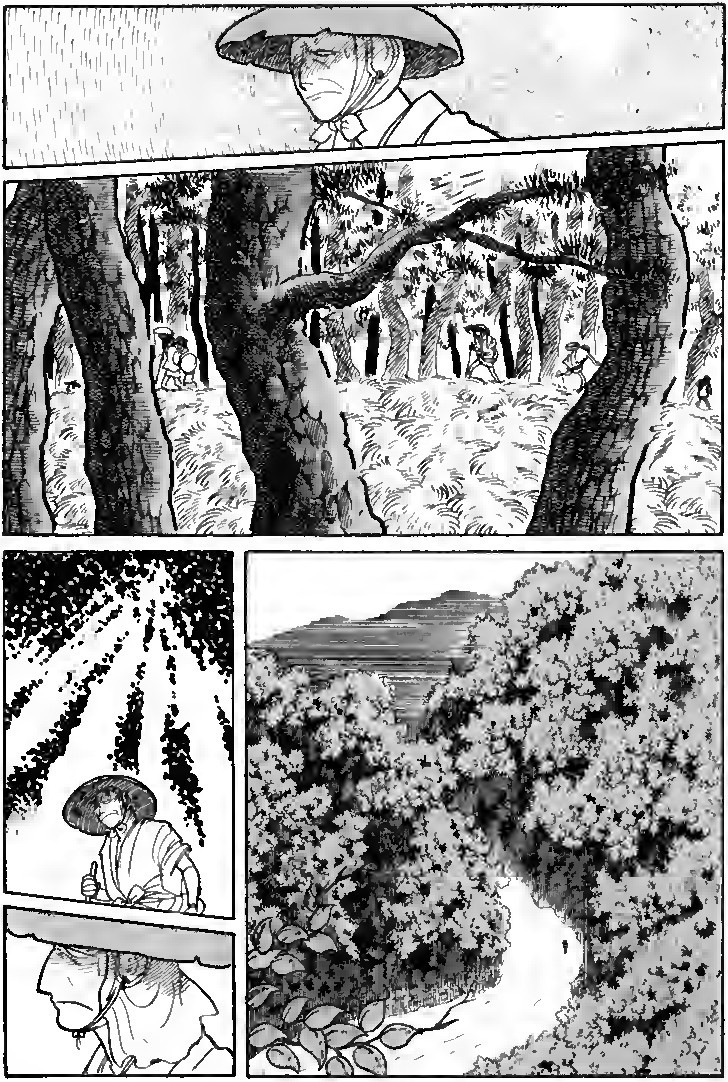
B-But... If I did that to every single one of them...
There would be no more normal people in this world...
...We're the only ones that need to suffer
!
Y... Yeah! You're not the only ones who suffer!
Even able-bodied people suffer more... and...
.....

We'll be back, and we'll make you pay!
We'll be back!
An able-bodied guy like you will never understand our pain!!
You'll pay for this, kid...!!
Sabu...
Please be safe...









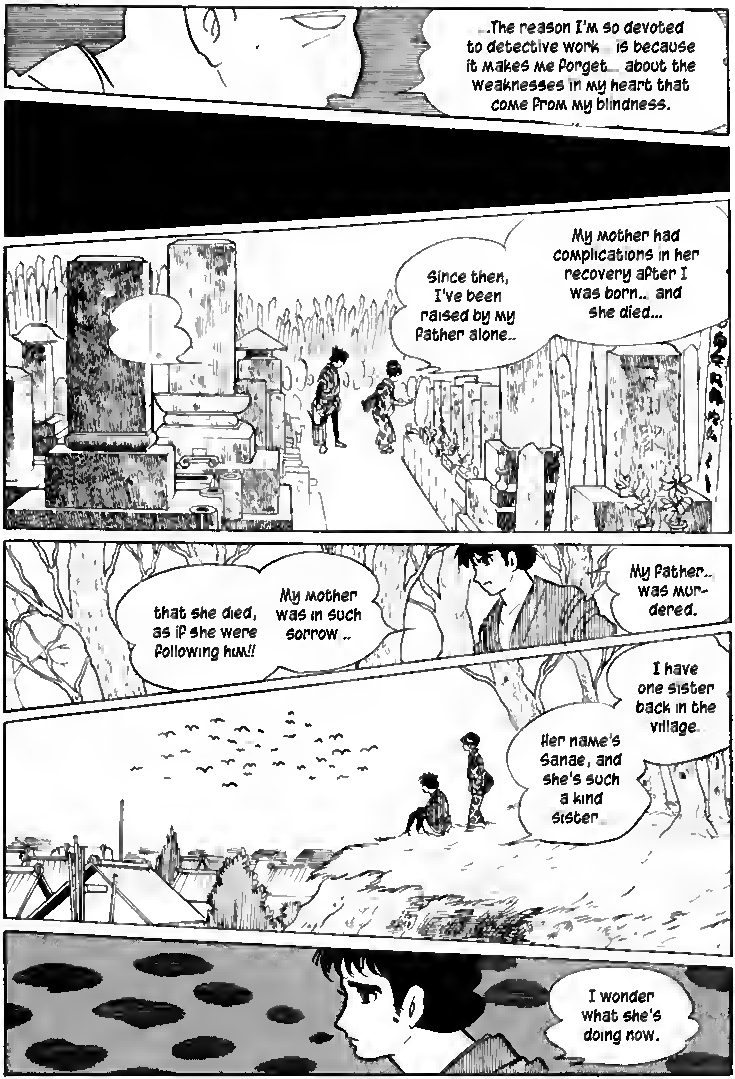
Sabu.
Please be safe.

I-I've only been drinking water for the past two or three days...
Eh...heh, that little workout's starting to make me hungry...
A...Amazing! I've... never worn such a great kimono... in my entire life!
That won't do.
You left your village with no permission ..!?
I left Kisai Village in the Koma District of Kai... and I had just got to Edo...
Yes.

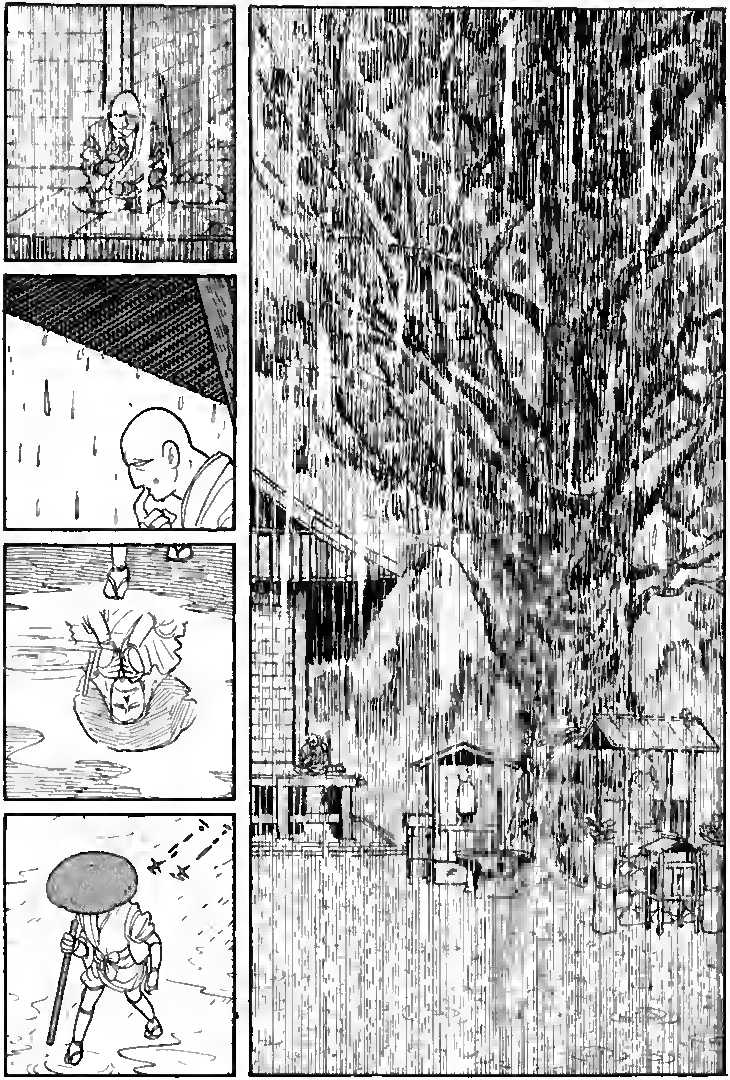
Hmm... I'll have to go talk to Mr Tanabe... and have him do something about this...
Doesn't the law say that peasants can't leave their village without permission?
had Plad to Edo, so I came in search of him.
I-I... wanted to avenge my father... I heard that his killer..
B-Boss! Bad news!!
No.
It's thin, but sturdy
Sabu, don't you think you should switch to this kind of rope?
You can use the pointy end of the truncheon as a weapon.

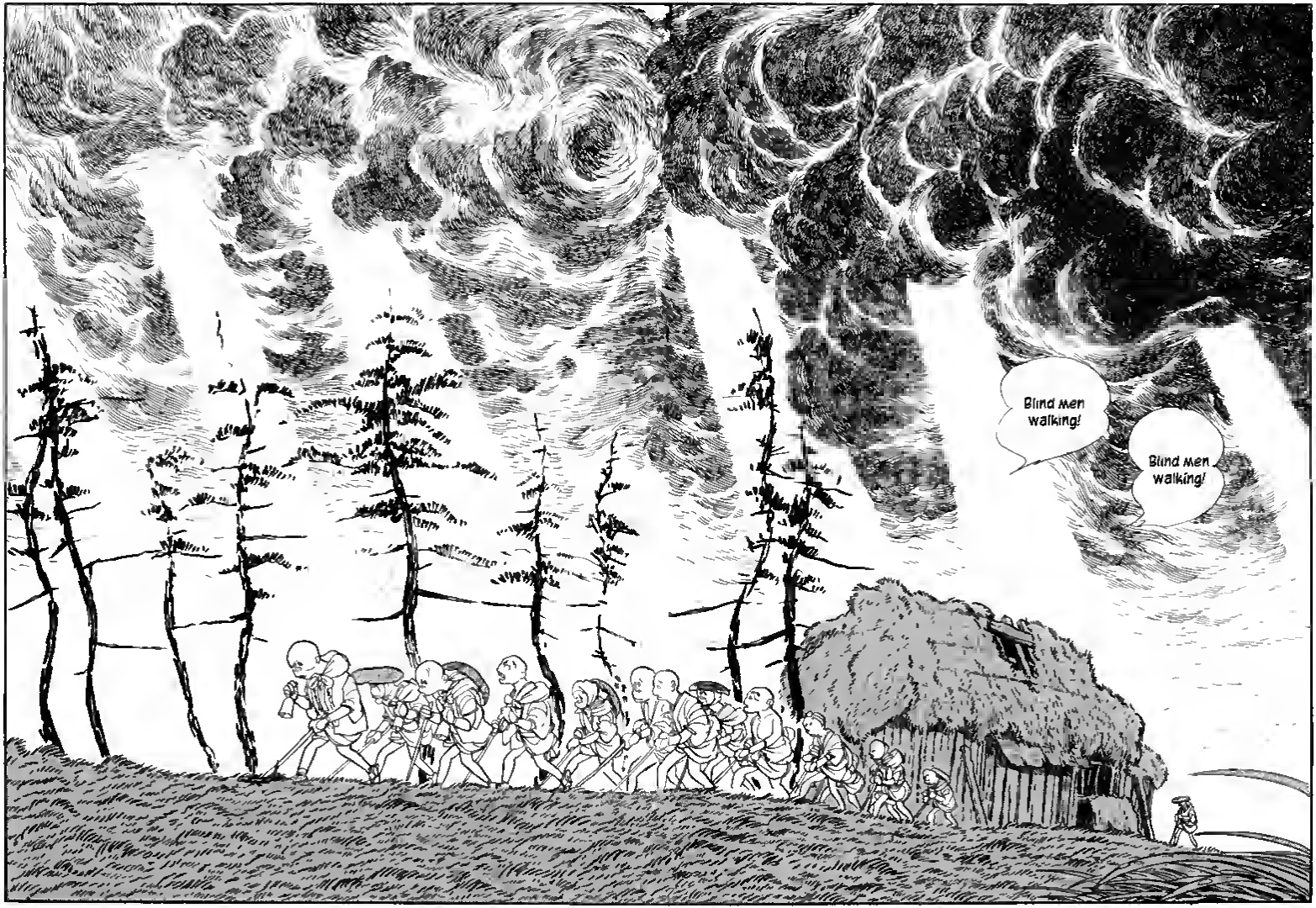
ミュン ミュン ミュン
ぶらり
ぶらり
ぶらり
ぶらり
...I was taught the way of the rope...
by a painter named Tachikawa Heiu ..
But he...
turned out to be a samurai named Tachikawa Hei ..
Ow, ow, ow...
He has a chronic gout... So every year when it gets cold...
S-Sabu, will you go in my place?
Y-Yes, Boss!

Sabu!
Got your back.
Ichi!!
Heh... hehe... Looks like you got a new catchphrase, Sabu.
If you ask me... this seems suspicious, Ichi.
Even a blind man like me... can live an honest life if I want to.
But what I can't accept are able-bodied people who do bad things.
But what I couldn't stand... was how rotten they were about it.
That's why I can't say I didn't understand the Demon Path Group's excuse.

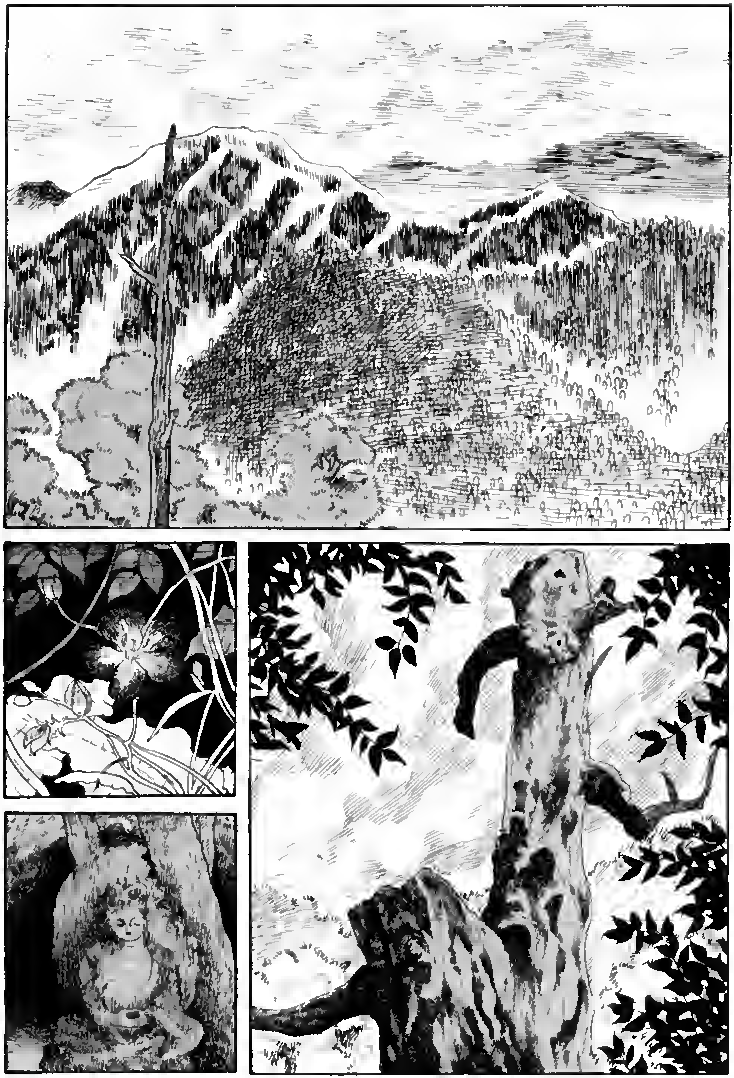

...The reason I'm so devoted to detective work... is because it makes me forget... about the weaknesses in my heart that come from my blindness.
My mother had complications in her recovery after I was born... and she died...
Since then, I've been raised by my father alone...
My father... was murdered.
My mother was in such sorrow...
that she died, as if she were following him!!
I have one sister back in the village.
Her name's Sanae, and she's such a kind sister...
I wonder what she's doing now.

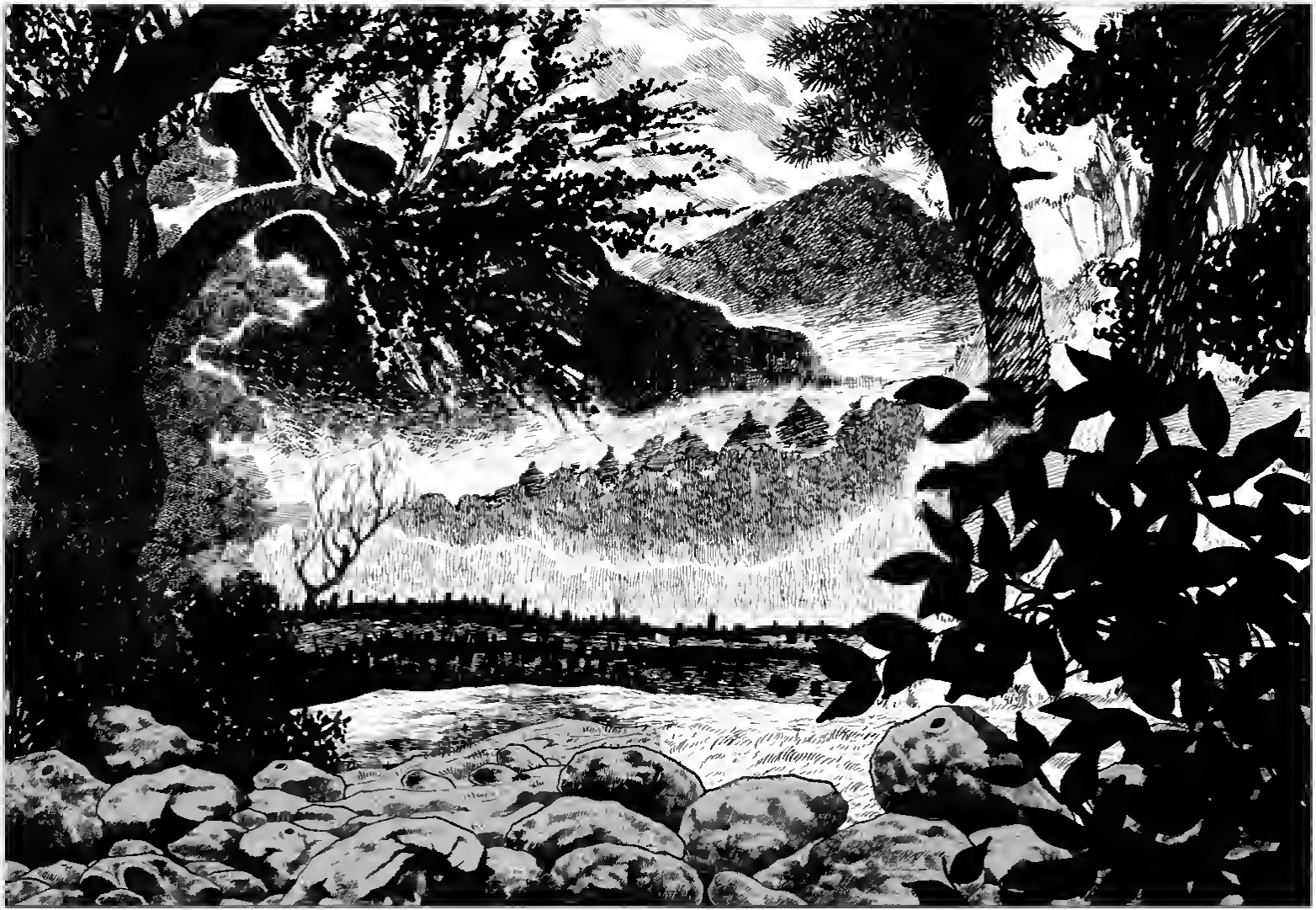
W-What!?
M-My sister is dying!?
Sabu
Yeah, Sabu! You need to go back!
.....
.....




Blind men walking!
Blind men walking!

Kasai Province, Kome District, Kasai Village...



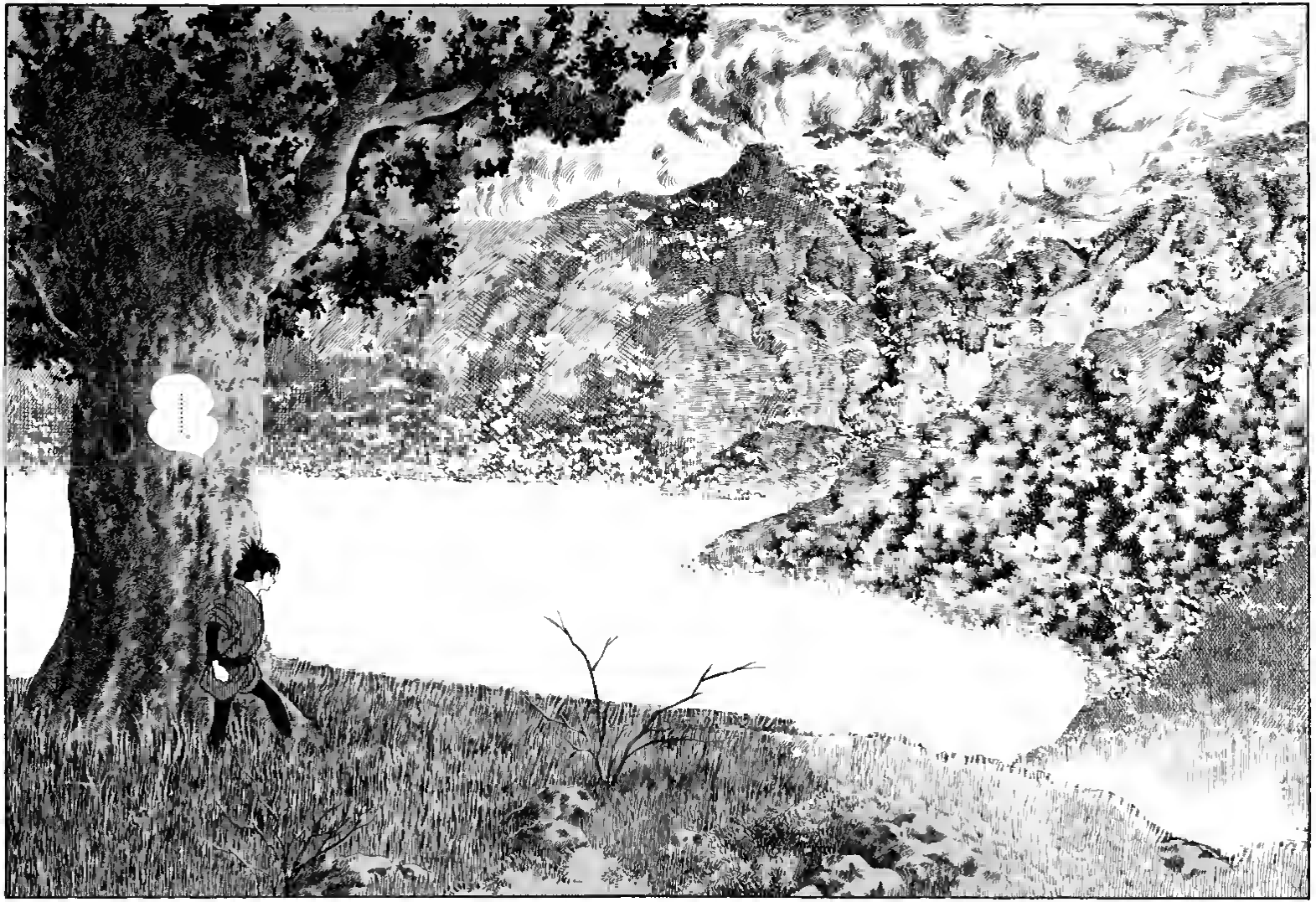


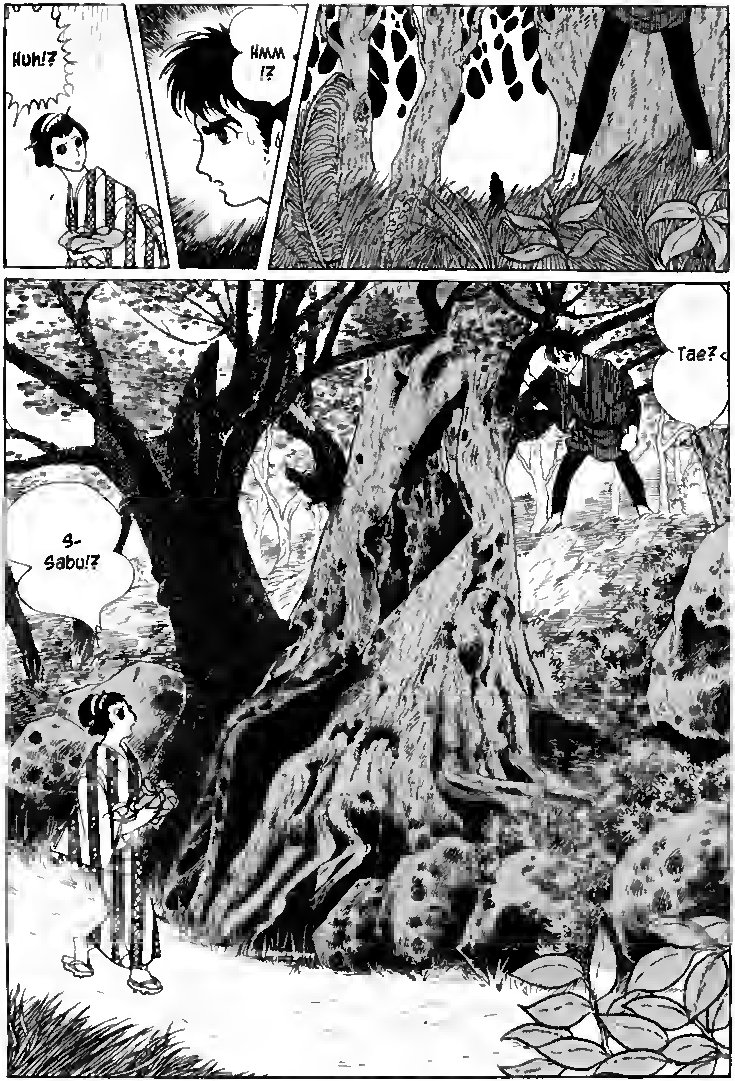
... Sister ...
If only .. I hadn't gone to Edo and left you alone..
It's all my fault!!
I'm sorry .. I'm so sorry, Sister.
This would never have happened!!

No... Your sister... has become happy now.
She can sleep soundly in her grave.
She ain't gonna suffer no more...
Oh yeah, the Mountain Village has their Water Festival tonight..
Not now...
Kch, goddamnit...
They'll be dancin' the Bonen Dance for three days and four nights.
That's right.

We could have a Festival or two ourselves.
If they didn't take more tribute than we could harvest to pay for the water...
If we just had a lot o' water...
Even we... Even we people of the valley village.

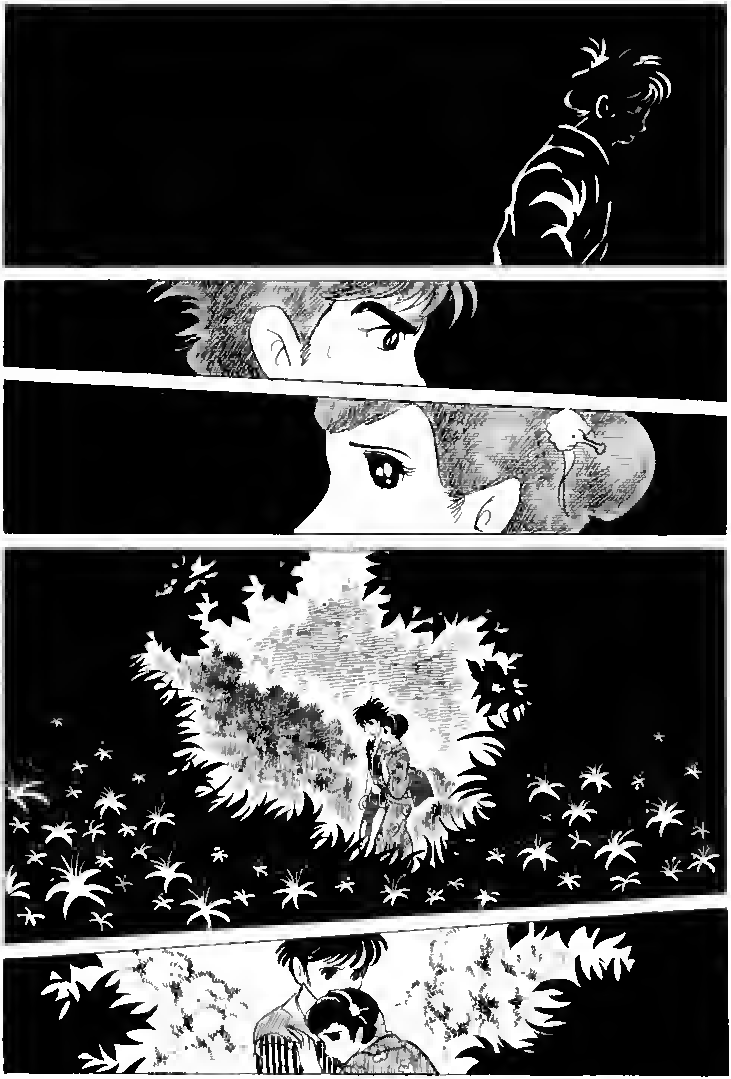
I'll go, too!
Me, too...
to let the water in the lake flow down to us and decrease our tribute.
and I'll try to persuade the headman...
...Alright, I'll go to the mountain village..
Father!!

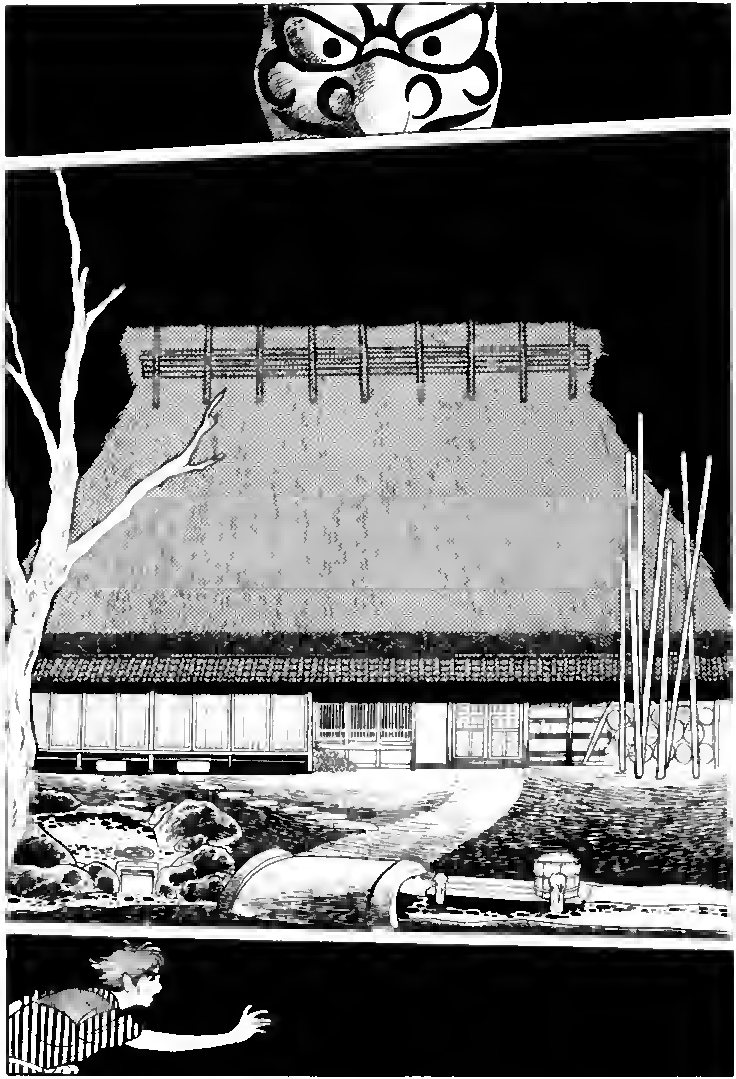



Huh!?
Hmm
!?
Tae?
S-
Sabu!?

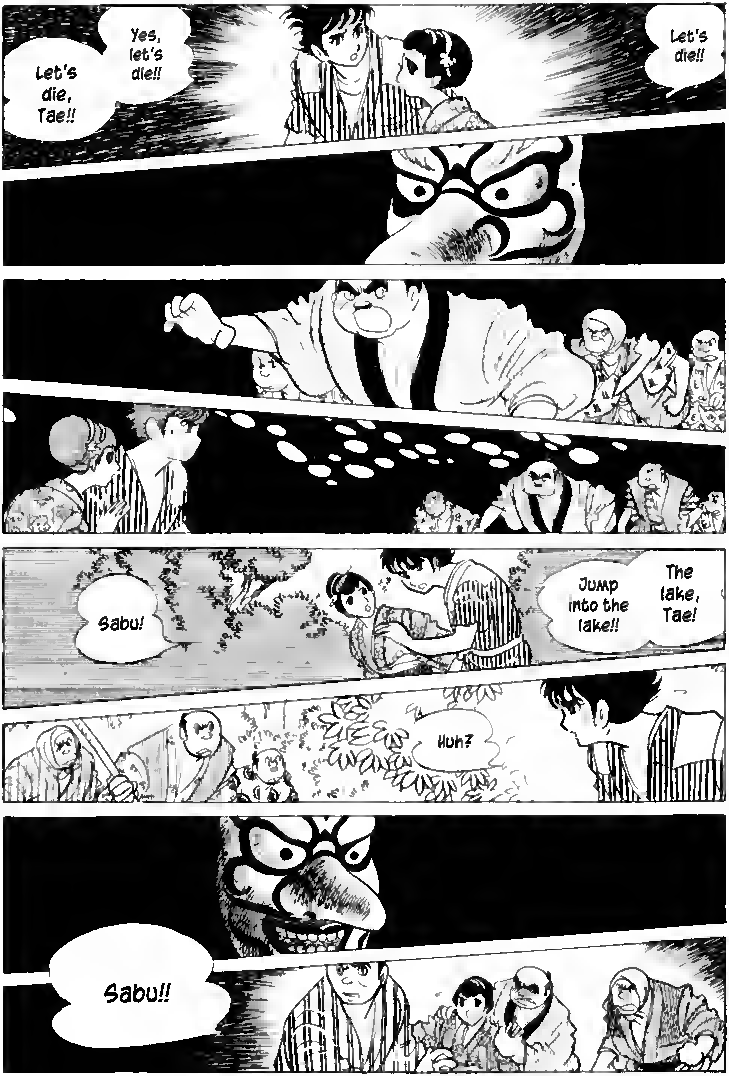
Tae!!
Sob...
Tae...!!

C-Could you have been going to visit my sister's grave...!?
This path goes down to the valley village.
What were you trying to do?
Tae...
Dumplings and incense... to offer to a grave...!?
That's not possible!!
B-But that's not...
...Heh.

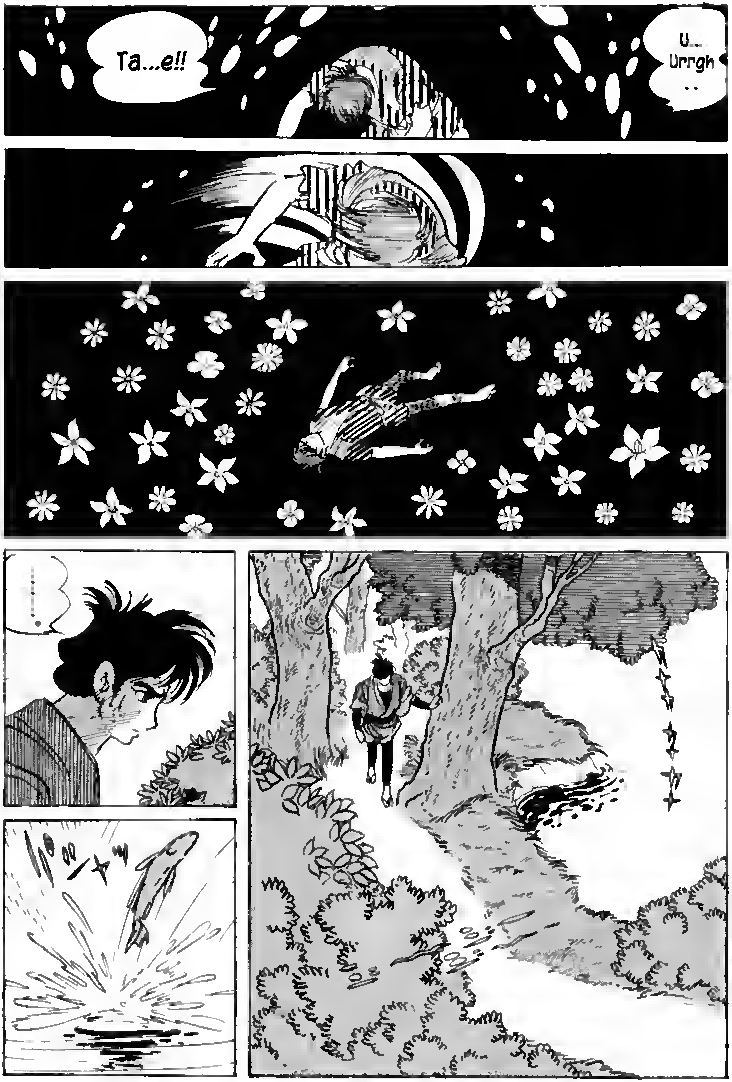


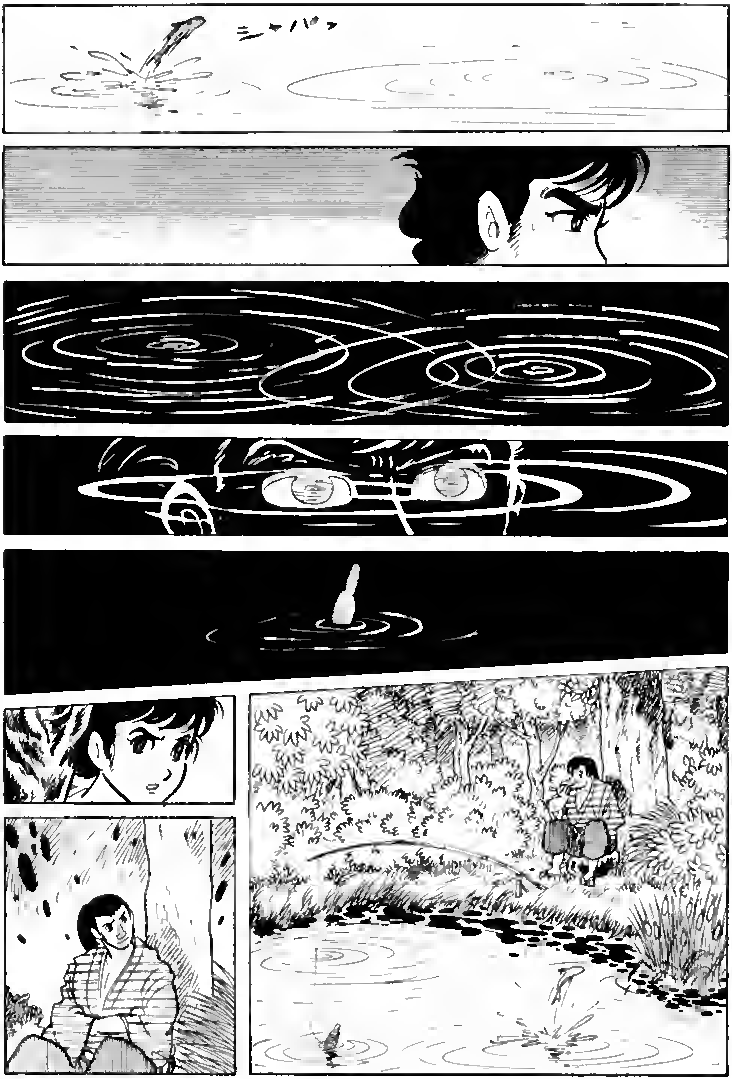


Tae!!
S-Sabu!!
Sabu, a-at this rate... I'll lose my mind!!
But the watch was so tight... and I just couldn't get out!
I missed you so much.
I-I missed you...
You have no idea how I felt as I loitered around your estate... every day and every night!!
I-I missed you too...!!
Let's die, Sabu!!
I-If we can't be together in this life...


Let's die, Tae!!
Yes, let's die!!
Let's die!!
Sabu!
Jump into the lake!!
The lake, Tae!
Huh?
Sabu!!

Tae...
Tae!!
Sa-
buuuu!!
Sabu!!
lay a hand on the only daughter of the headman of the mountain village ..
Fuckin' brat!!
How dare a mere valley folk like you
Time to smack some manners into ya!!
Kch.
Now listen Never show yourself in the mountain village again
Next time we see you
we'll beat you to death!


Ta...e!!
U...
Urrgh
...


ニャバッ

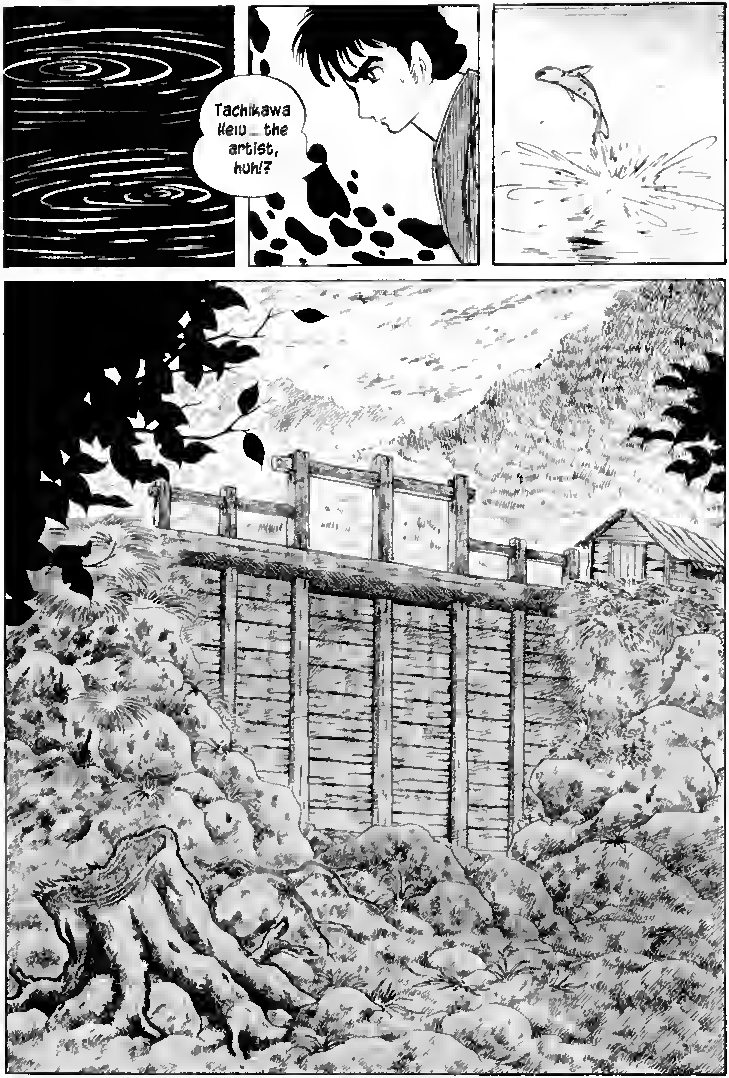
.. Hehhe, I think the fish are mocking me.
Hehhe... Ahaha!
Ha ha ha!
Tch.
Ehe-he...
Hehe ...
I came here drawn by the scenery around here...
a clumsy travelling artist named Tachikawe Heiu.
I'M....
That's a nice name.
Oh, so your name's Sabu?

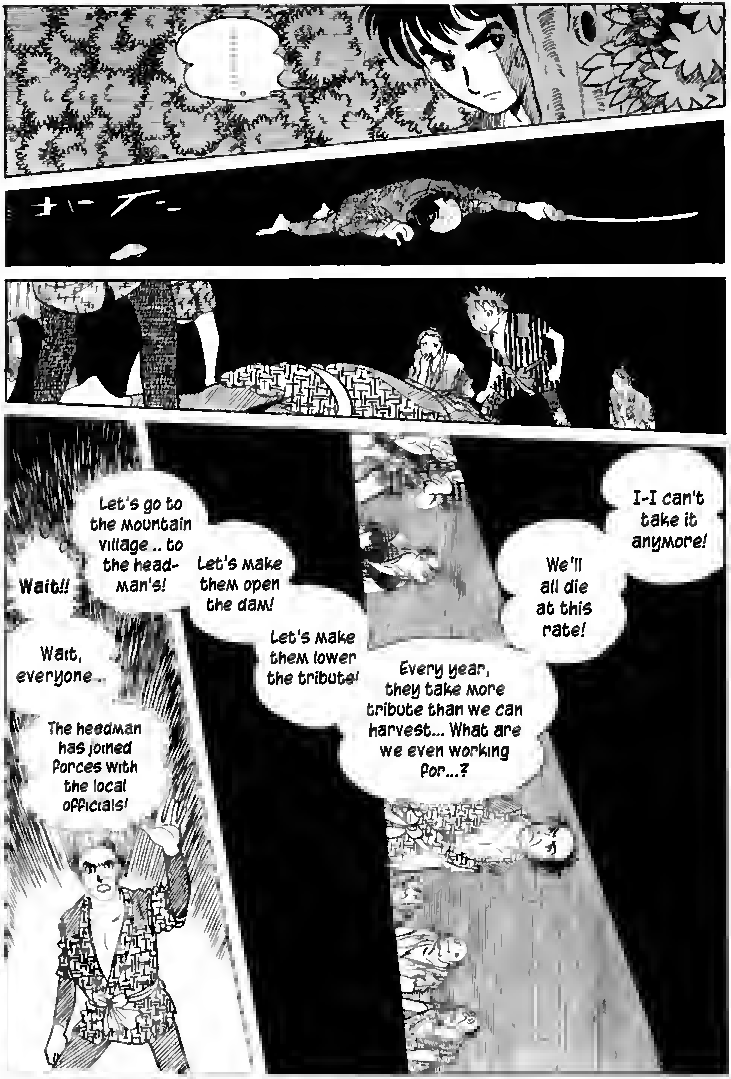
Haha haha!
I'm just a natural sloth. I've been putting work off and spending all my time fishing.
..Actually that's just an excuse
but it's just too beautiful to draw
?
Alright, kid, to show my thanks for sticking around... How about I show you something neat?
Hmm, but still, these fish are getting on my nerves

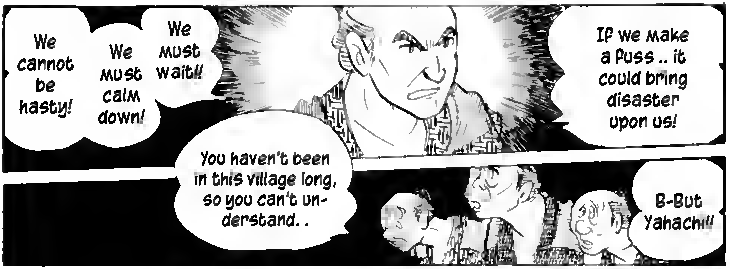
Amazing... Hey, hey can you show me that again?
Hehe... Oh, this is just what I do to kill time!
Y-You can do some amazing things, can't you?
Wow!
Hehehe..
Hehehe... Don't bother. A little learning is a dangerous thing.
Peasants only need to know how to make rice.
Oh?
You want to learn, too...?
I-I wanna...
Wow!!
Amazing!!

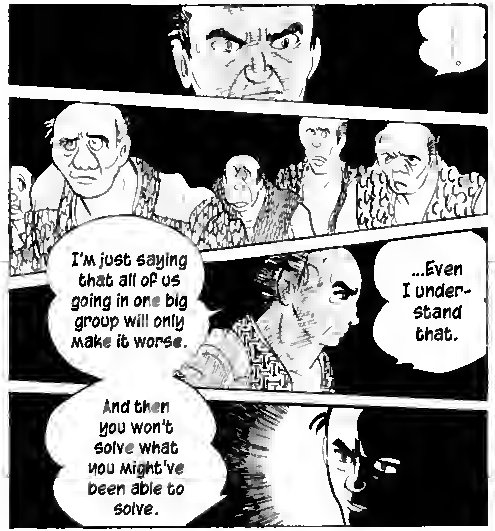
... Hmpf
Well then, why don't you come here every day after noon?
You don't leave me much choice.
Alright, I got it.
We'll figure out .. how far you can go.
No, no!
Ease up in your arm....

You're surprisingly talented for a peasant... Sabu!
Hmm.. Well done.
Even you.. used to be a painter, didn't you...?
As long as you try hard enough.. anyone can get good at anything!
Eheh.. It doesn't matter if you're a peasant or a samurai.
But that aside You're an interesting kid, Sabu.
You may be right!
Hahha! I see!


Tachikawa Keiu... the artist, huh!?


I-I can't take it anymore!
We'll all die at this rate!
Every year, they take more tribute than we can harvest... What are we even working for...?
Let's make them lower the tribute!
Let's make them open the dam!
Let's go to the mountain village .. to the head-man's!
Wait!!
Wait, everyone ..
The headman has joined forces with the local officials!


We cannot be hasty!
We must calm down!
We must wait!!
If we make a fuss .. it could bring disaster upon us!
You haven't been in this village long, so you can't understand. .
B-But Yahachi!!

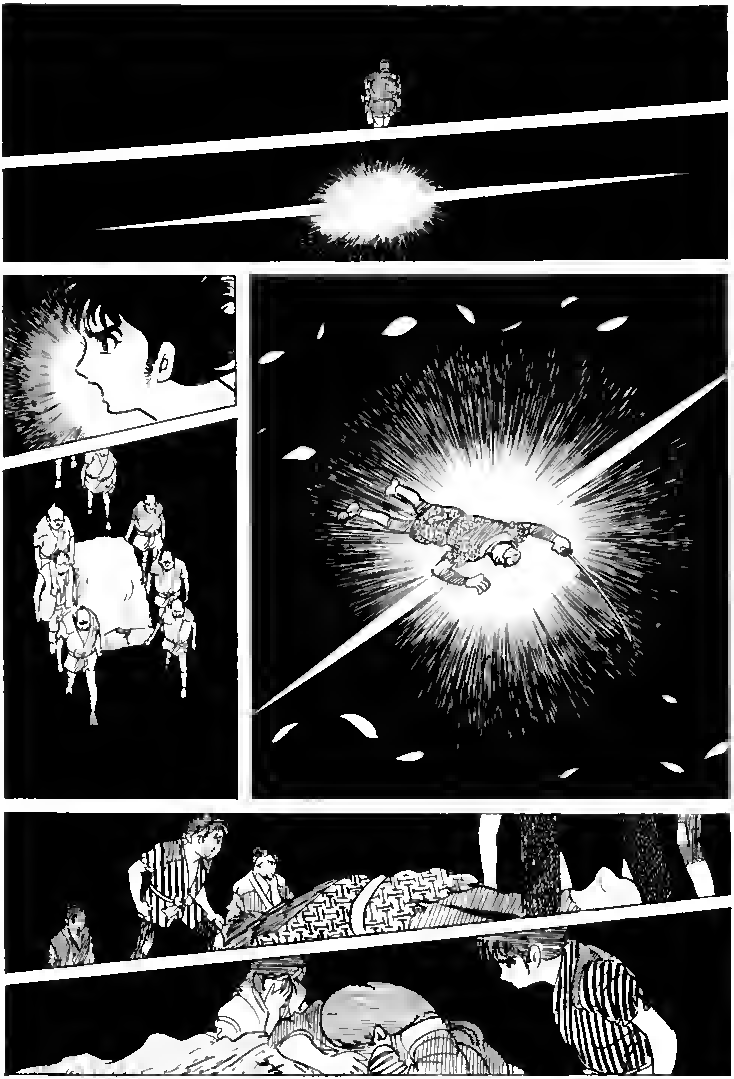

I'm just saying that all of us going in one big group will only make it worse.
...Even I understand that.
And then you won't solve what you might've been able to solve.

We've been living like this every year and every day from our fathers' and grandfathers' generations!
Even if we can bear with it...
We pity our children that will have to suffer here!!

Alone !?
Huh!?
..I'll go there alone . as your representative!!

Take me with you!
Me too!
I'll go, too!
...Dear?
Miho...
...I...
But it seems I couldn't cast it aside forever...
I thought I would never touch my sword again
I tho-ught I had completely become a peasant.
I wanted to live as a peasant for a much longer time
I want Sabu and Sanae to enjoy working in the fields
But now that I've finally become a peasant,
I know... that the headman isn't a man who will listen to words alone...
...Dear...!!

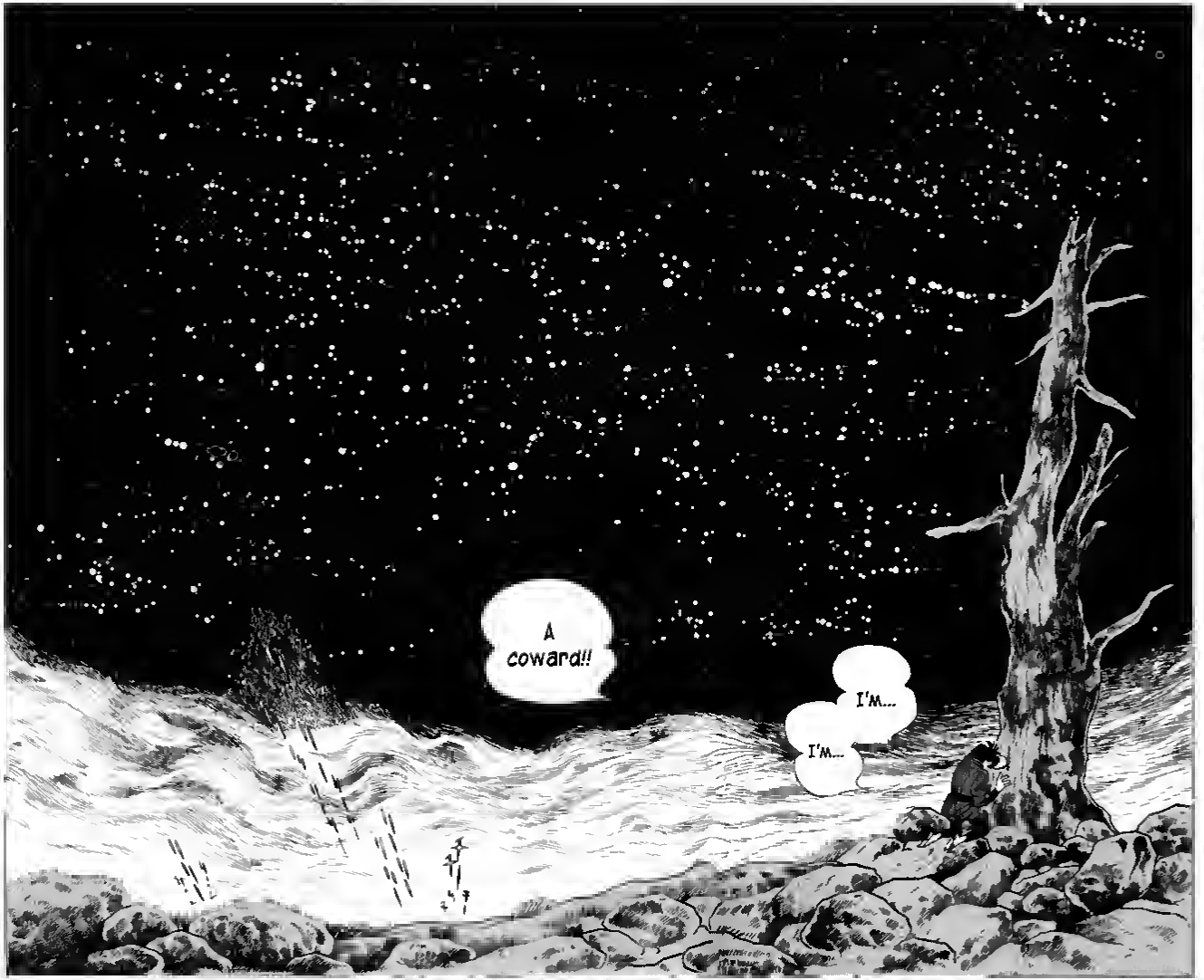
I swear I will return!!
Don't worry, Miho.
Take me with you!!
I'll go...
Father!!
Do not be conceited!!
Fool!!
...Sabu, I hear you are doing strange things lately, swinging around ropes and the like...
Listen. All a peasant needs to swing is his hoe!



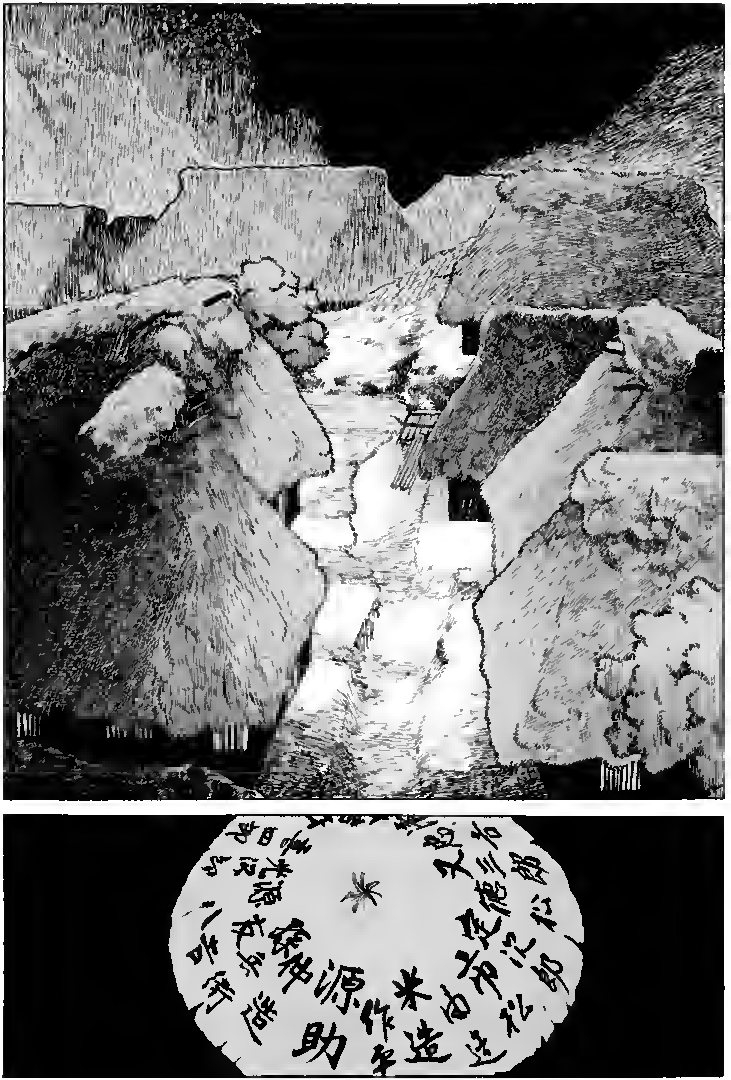
Tachi-kawa Hei!!
Huh!?
Who .. Who murdered my father!?
N-Now, speak!!
U-Uhhh ...
I-I don't know! W-We don't know anything!!
Don't play dumb with me, dammit!
Kcch! F-Fine, I'll talk! J-Just loosen the rope! I-I can't breathe!

What!?
H-He was killed...
by the headman's bodyguard... a ronin named Master Tachikawa Hei.
Y-You mean Tachikawa Heiu, the artist!?
Tachikawa Hei!?
In case you valley folk ever caused a ruckus!
T-The headman let him freeload as a fencing instructor...
T-That's right!
G-Goddammit!!
I-Is that ronin still at the headman's house?
N-No,
The headman came in, afraid that the riot would get even bigger...
and he sent the master to Edo last night...

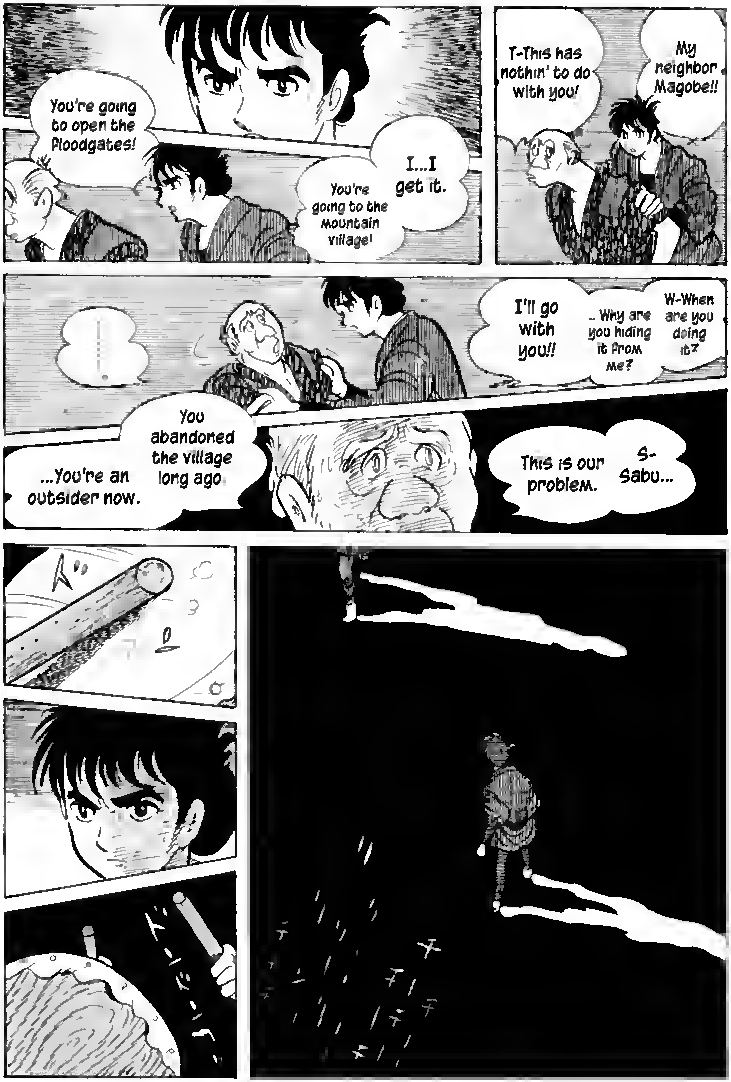
ギュ
Tachi-kawa Hei!!
Sis-ter!!
I...


A coward!!
I'm...
I'm...

I...
I said I was leaving the village to avenge Father and Mother
B-But.. But the truth was...
I didn't want to live as a peasant! Living in this village..
was too hard for me!!
I-I ran away from everything.. even Tae!!


源助
作左
米造

米造
源助
Shhh, he's here!!
On the evening the Festival is most bustling...
Then, tomorrow!!
...Alright, everyone's name is on there..
!?
W-What's going on, villagers?
What were you all doing gathered in there?
Yonezo!!
At-sushi!!


You're going to open the floodgates!
You're going to the mountain village!
I...I get it.
T-This has nothin' to do with you!
My neighbor Magobe!!
I'll go with you!!
...Why are you hiding it from me?
W-When are you doing it?
This is our problem.
S-Sabu...
You abandoned the village long ago.
...You're an outsider now.

ピッ
ピッ
チャ
チャ
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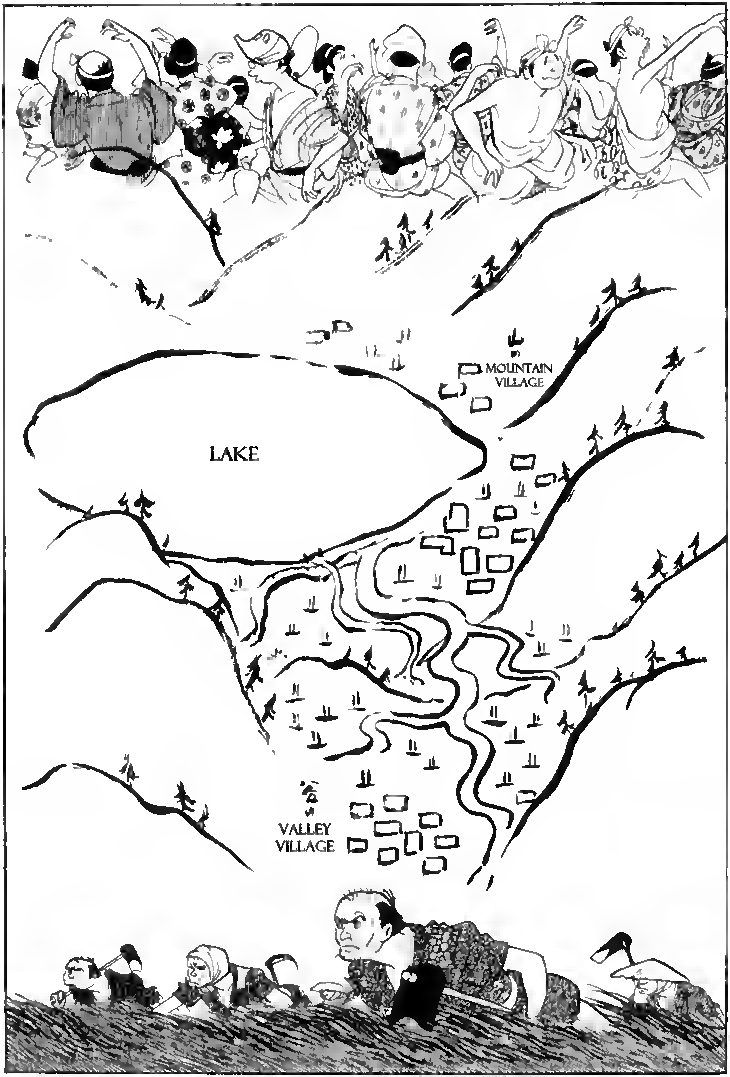
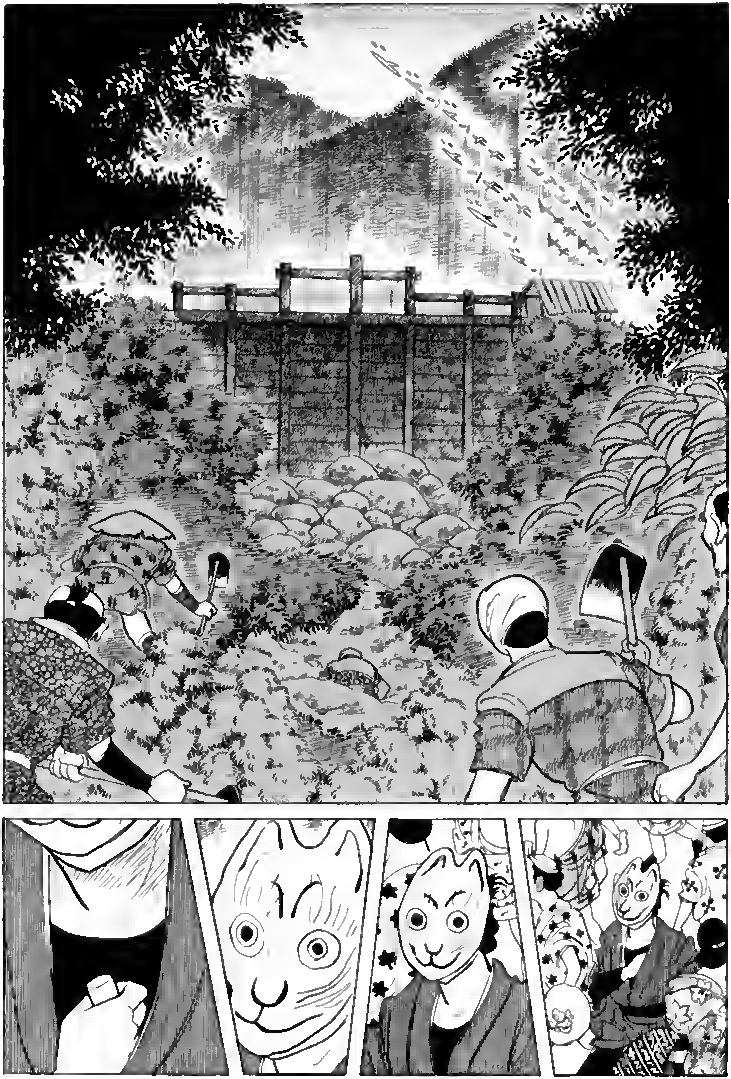
ドン


MOUNTAIN VILLAGE
LAKE
VALLEY VILLAGE



Huh?

Headman, you have no right to celebrate this festival!

You've closed off the floodgates and forced a high tribute on us to pay for the water .. Do you realize how much you've made the valley folk suffer?
Don't tell me you don't know why!
and I've come here to kill you!!
I'm Sabu of the valley village...
Do you remember me, headman?

You'll have to die first.
Uaa... aauaah...
So before that happens...
If this keeps up, all the valley folk will end up dead!

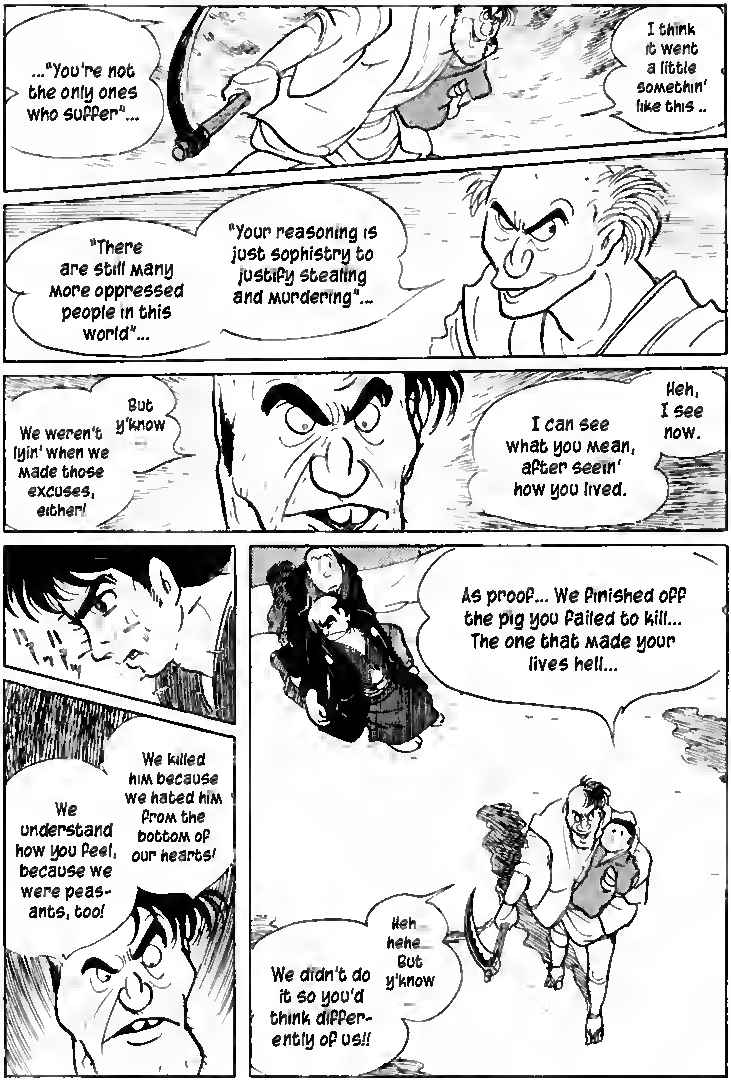
S-
Sabu!!
Huh?
S-
Somebody
take him
a-
Gah!?
Aieeeeeee
eeeeeee!
You there...
You're Sabu,
right!?
Don't do
anything
stupid!
Ichi!?
Uaa...
aahhh..
H-H-H
Help me!

Hey, brat. Long time no see.
Heh...
Hehe..
My baby!!
On top of that, the masseur is with you... Hehehe...
Urrgh.. Dammit! You're ..!!
.....!?
That we are!
Indeed.
Hehe-he...
HUUUh !?
The Demon Path Group!!

Urggh... H-How did you get here..!?
Ichi!?
None of your business! We told you,
We'd come back to return the favor!
They escaped the island of their exile, Sabu.
They es-caped.
Don't move, Mas-seun!!
You too... kid!
Now, just stay there...
and drop your truncheon and sword cane out of reach!
Hey, do as I said, now!!
My baby!!

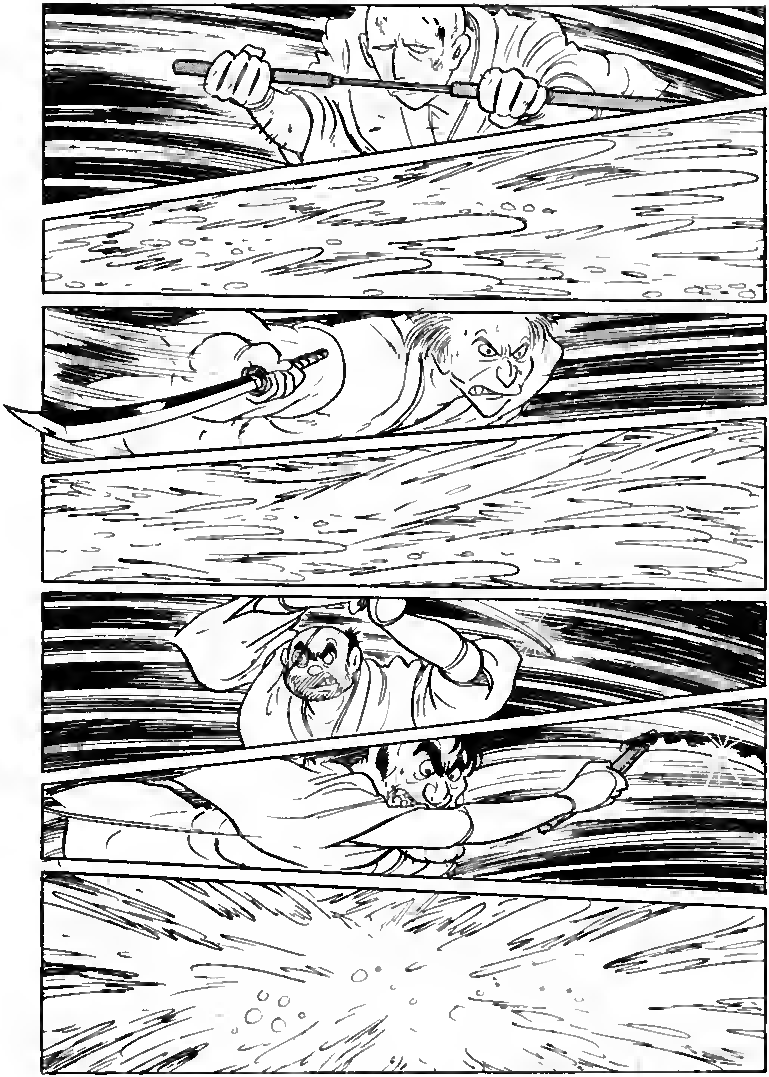
Kch.
Urgh!
We'll enjoy every second of it until you die.
We'll kill you slowly.
Kehe-he...
Oooh!

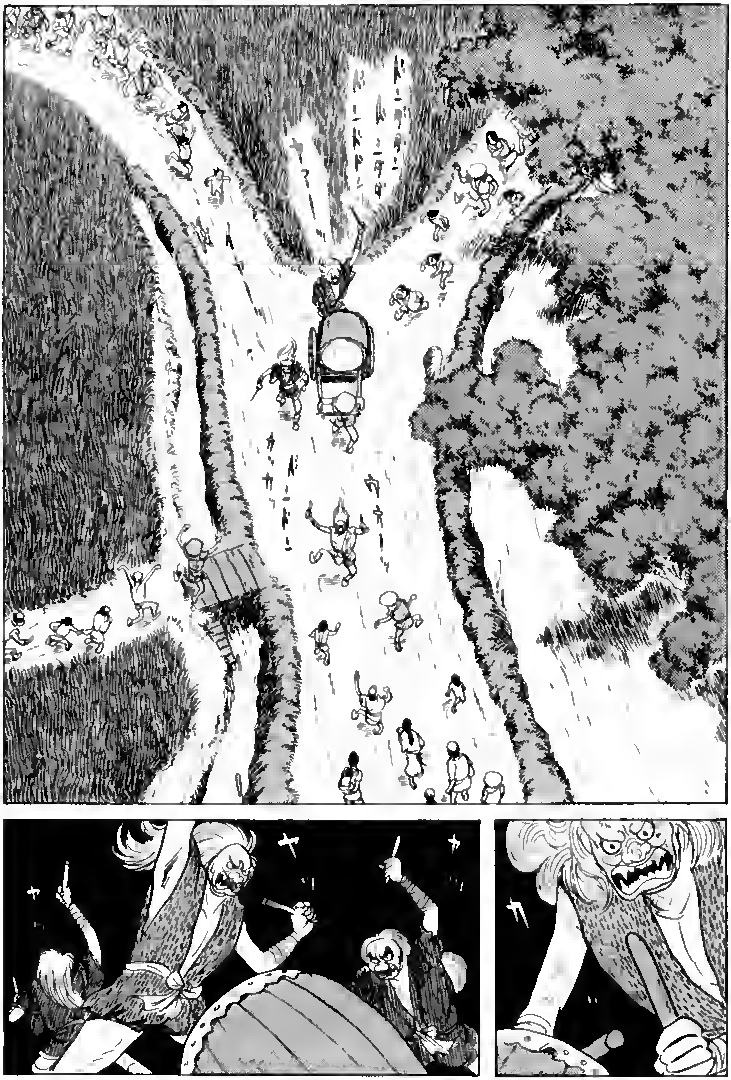
Uheh ..
Uhehe...
And kid, after you jumped in... and tied us all up... you said somethin' real self-important!
This is exactly like last time, ain't it?
Hey, masseur!
Heh-hehhe ...
Huh!?
Yeah!! What was it again?
Say it again!!
Mmgh..


...“You're not the only ones who suffer”...
I think it went a little somethin' like this ..
“There are still many more oppressed people in this world”...
“Your reasoning is just sophistry to justify stealing and murdering”...
We weren't lyin' when we made those excuses, either!
But y'know ...
I can see what you mean, after seein' how you lived.
Heh, I see now.
We understand how you feel, because we were peasants, too!
We killed him because we hated him from the bottom of our hearts!
As proof... We finished off the pig you failed to kill... The one that made your lives hell...
We didn't do it so you'd think differently of us!!
Heh hehe... But y'know ...

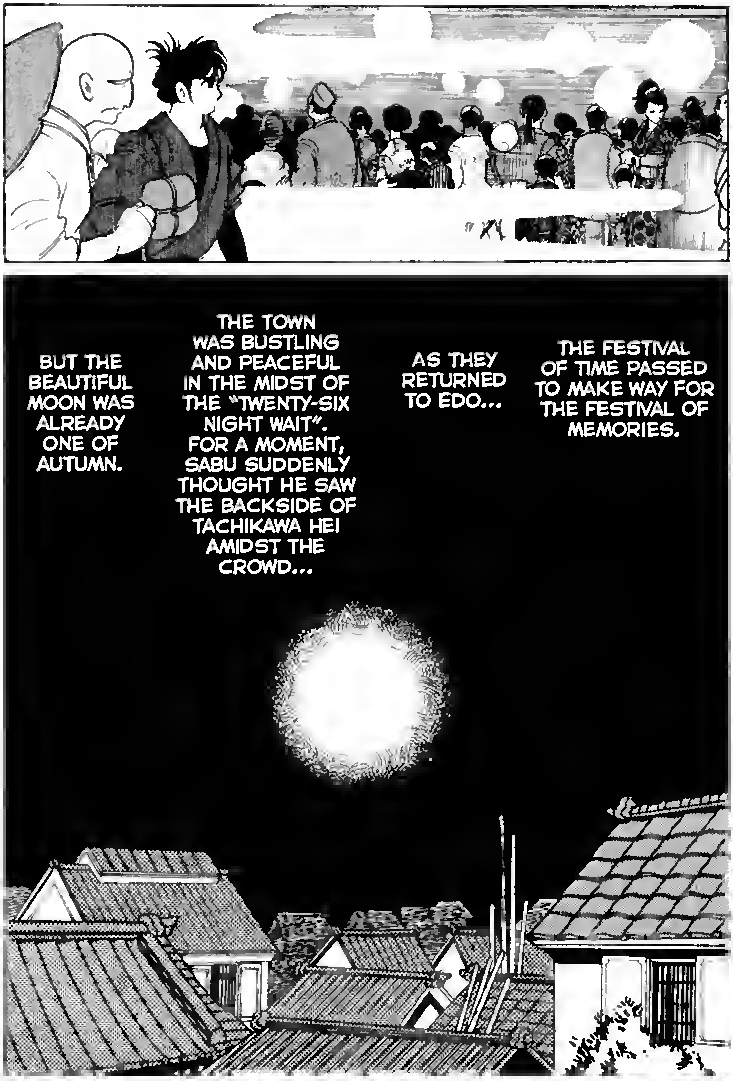
From making you pay for capturing and exiting us...
But... That said,
that's a whole other matter...
It's time you said your prayers!!
Alright, then ..
Hehehe.. I've been waiting so long.. for this moment...!!

T-The embankment's burst!!
The flood-gates have opened!!
HMM!?
I-Ichi!!
Shit!





That's good
From now on, every year, they'll send us all the water that we need!!
The headman's daughter made a promise!
Sabu!!
I was really going to stab the headman back there...
...Ichi.
Even with my truncheon and rope in my pocket..
Hehe...
That's how easy it is for people to become criminals...!!


BUT THE BEAUTIFUL MOON WAS ALREADY ONE OF AUTUMN.
THE TOWN WAS BUSTLING AND PEACEFUL IN THE MIDST OF THE "TWENTY-SIX NIGHT WAIT". FOR A MOMENT, SABU SUDDENLY THOUGHT HE SAW THE BACKSIDE OF TACHIKAWA HEI AMIDST THE CROWD...
AS THEY RETURNED TO EDO...
THE FESTIVAL OF TIME PASSED TO MAKE WAY FOR THE FESTIVAL OF MEMORIES.

October 1968 "Festival of Time" (FIN)

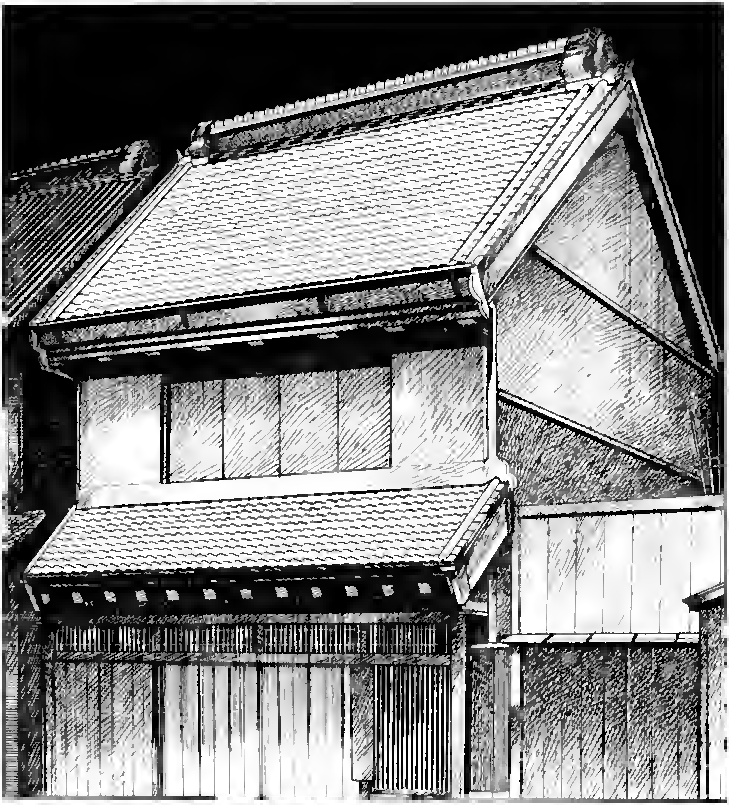
佐武と市捕物控

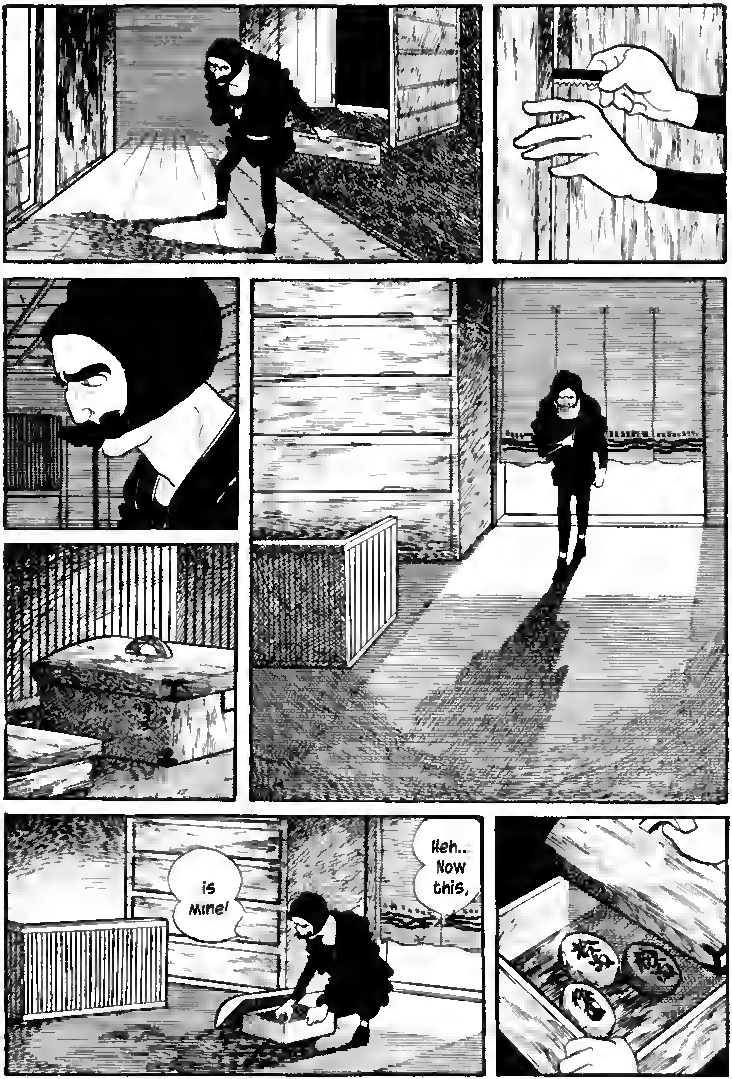
SABU & ICHI

Chapter 12
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

Chapter 13: Bettara Market

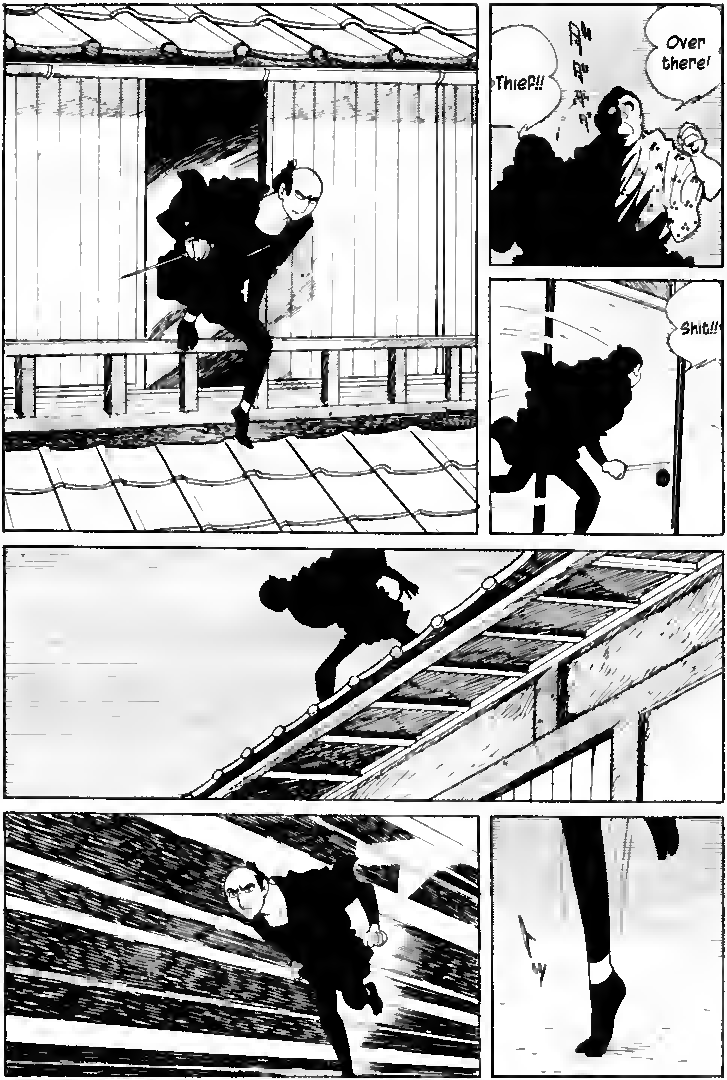


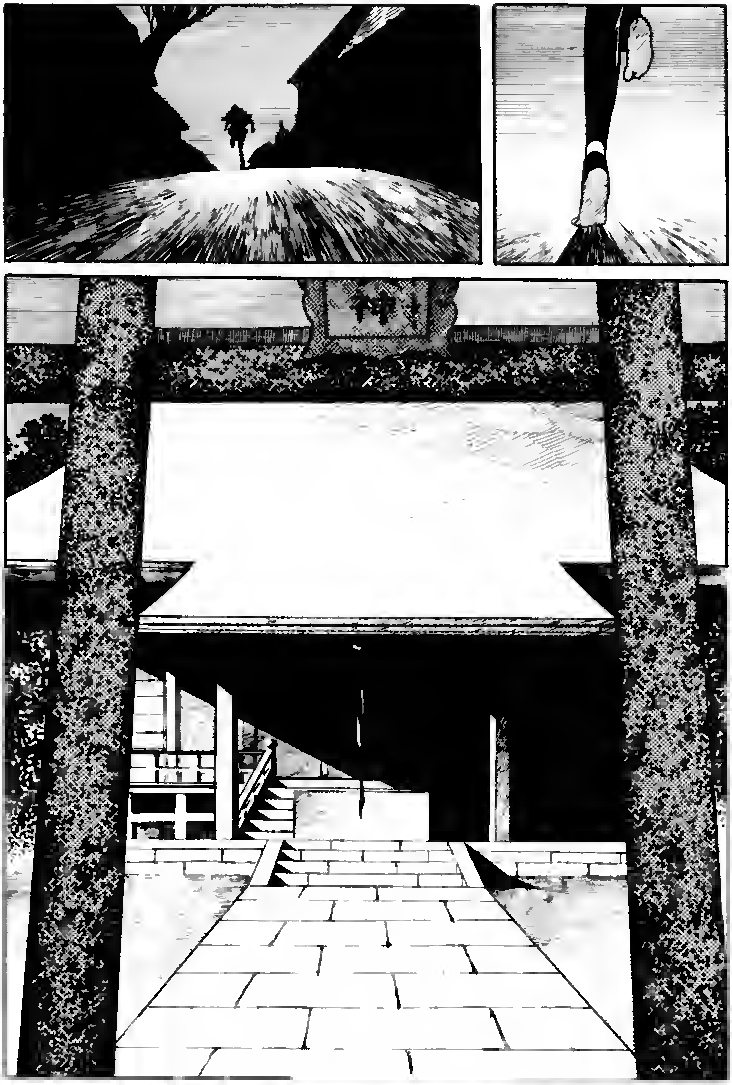

Heh..
Now
this,
is
Mine!

Eek!
Who's there!?

Tch!!
.....
Wah!!
Urk!!

Ah!!
Y-
You're
...!?
Gwah
!!
D-
Dam-
mit!!

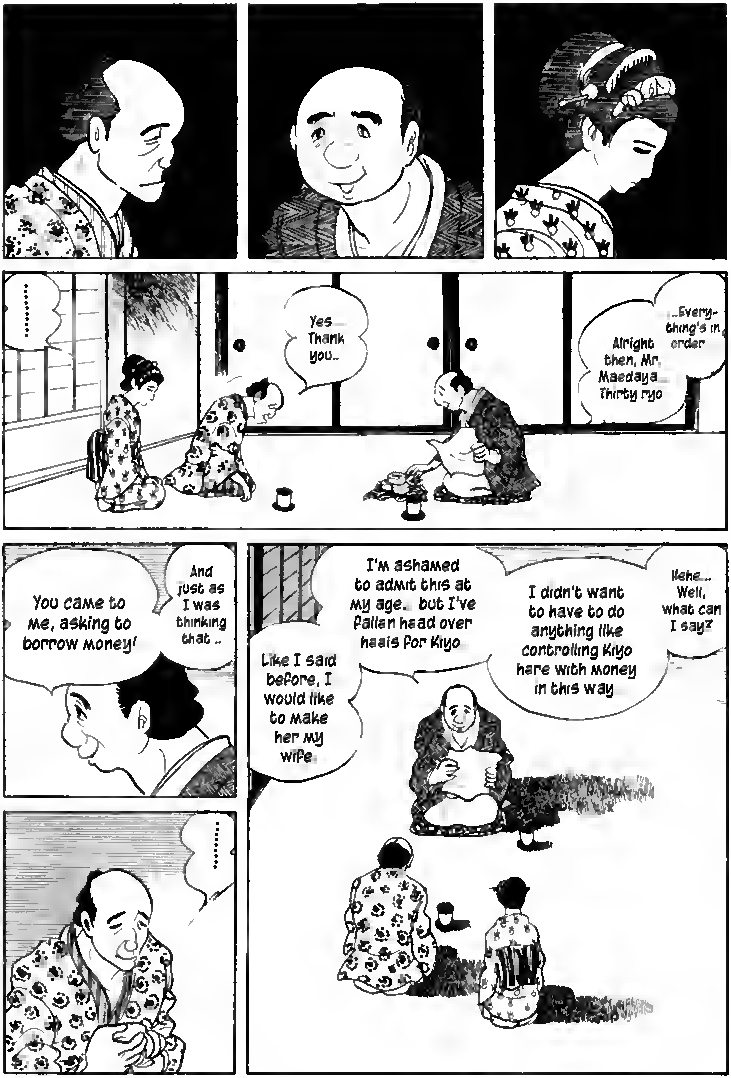

Over there!
Thief!!
Shit!!
ドン



Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Phew...
G-God-dammit!!
I... I've finally taken a life...!!
A-All because that jackass had to see my face I've finally...
become a murderer!!

I was always proud of how.. I would take money, but never lives..
As Sen the Owl—
Ah!!
He-hehe..
Heh—

I guess Seiji the Owl's lost his touch..

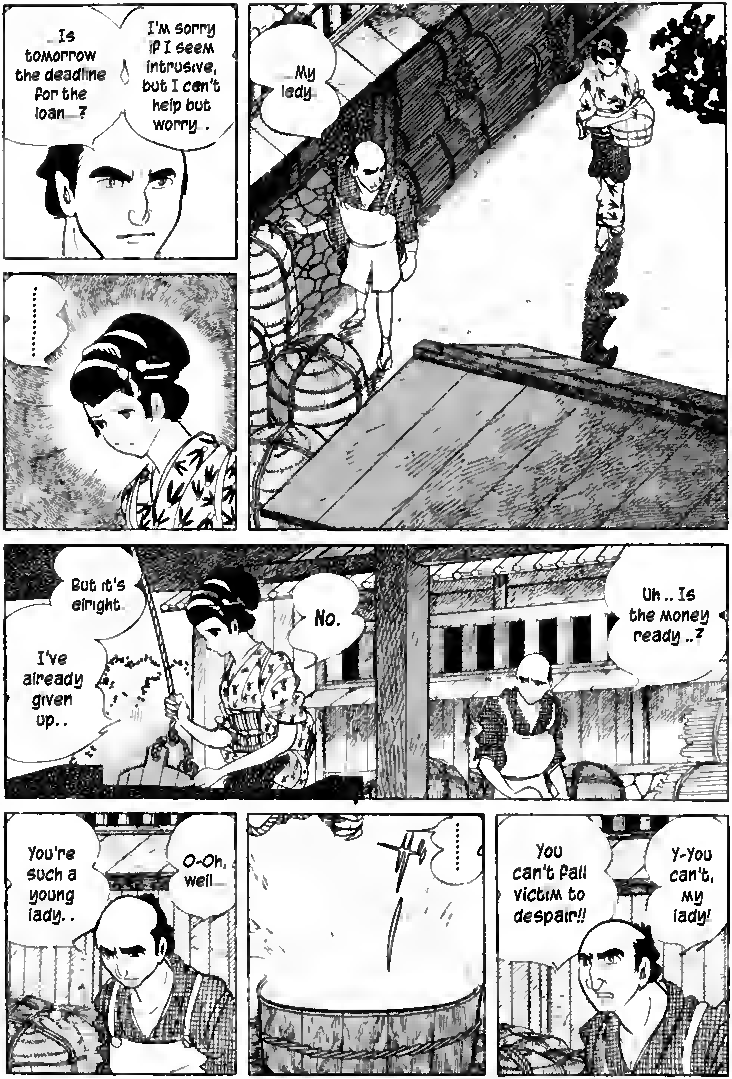

Yes... Thank you...
Alright then, Mr. Maedaya... thirty ryo
...Everything's in order
You came to me, asking to borrow money!
And just as I was thinking that...
I'm ashamed to admit this at my age... but I've fallen head over heels for Kiyo
I didn't want to have to do anything like controlling Kiyo here with money in this way
Like I said before, I would like to make her my wife
Hehe... Well, what can I say?

Thirty ryo is a lot of money to petty traders like us...
And, well... I had thought of these as separate matters...
But now I've had to draw up this contract.
No need to worry, Kiyo
Just make sure the money is paid by the day you agreed to pay it
and then I will be the only one that is sad
.....

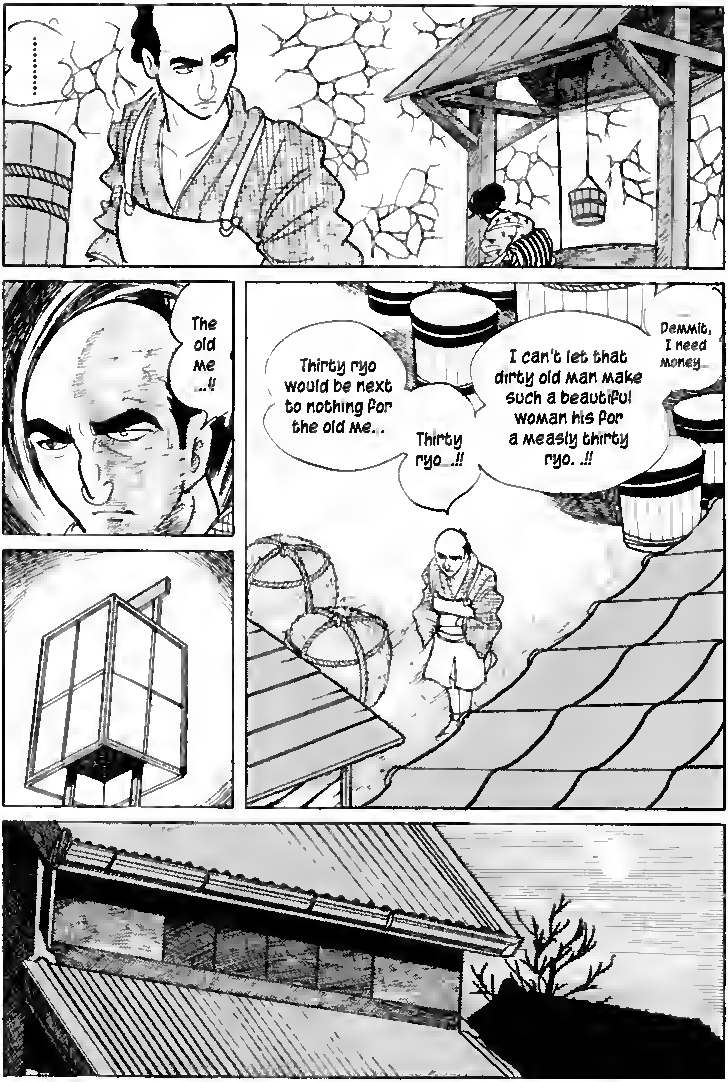
..I see...
My business has been disappointing...
My deepest apologies!
Well then...
Oh, all right.
.....

...But if you can't pay by then, then as we agreed...
Yes, until the day before the Bettara Market.
I will wait five more days.
...I under-stand..
Yes.
.....
Ah!!
My lady!!

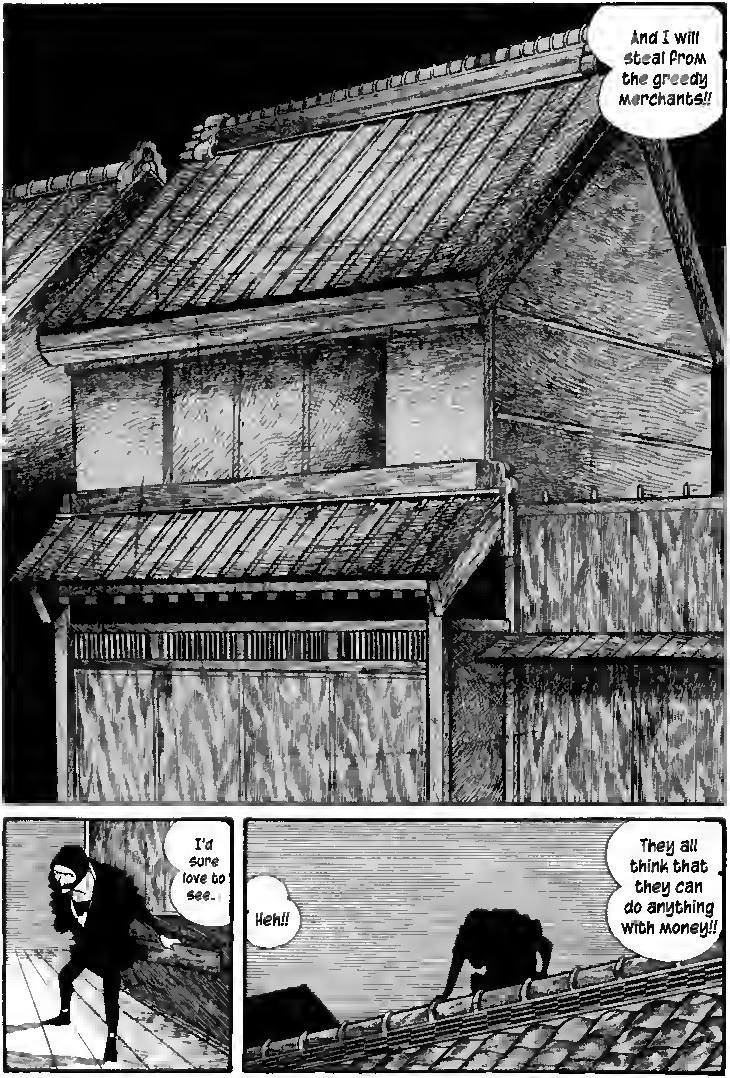
I'm sorry, I just overheard that..
.....
My lady!!
.....
I can't just break into another house and make some money in my condition
I have no choice


Is tomorrow the deadline for the loan...?
I'm sorry if I seem intrusive, but I can't help but worry.
My lady.
.....
But it's alright.
I've already given up..
No.
Uh.. Is the money ready..?
You're such a young lady..
O-Oh, well...
You can't fall victim to despair!!
Y-You can't, my lady!

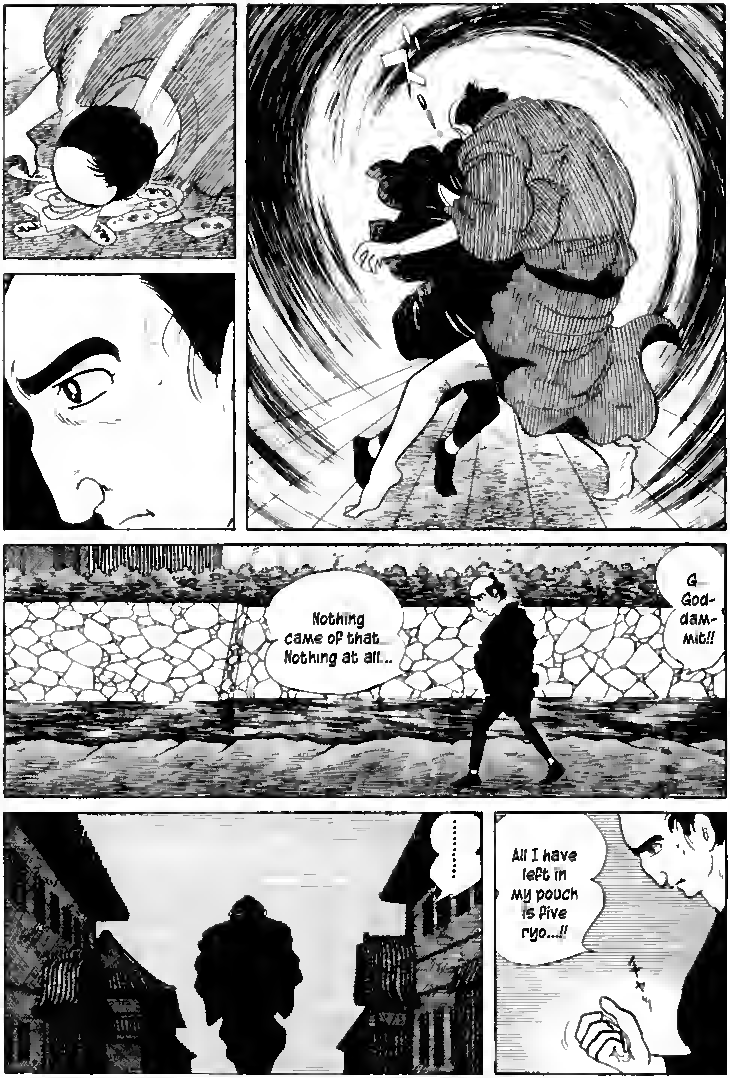
Or maybe you're going to say—
But... That won't change a thing...
Too young to be married to that old geezer...!!
Well? Were you?
"I'll... take you and run away somewhere..."
"Kiyo!!
M-My lady!?
Hoho ho!!
Ho...
If that is what you desire...
It's obvious that it would only cause my father more pain!!
I cannot do that!!

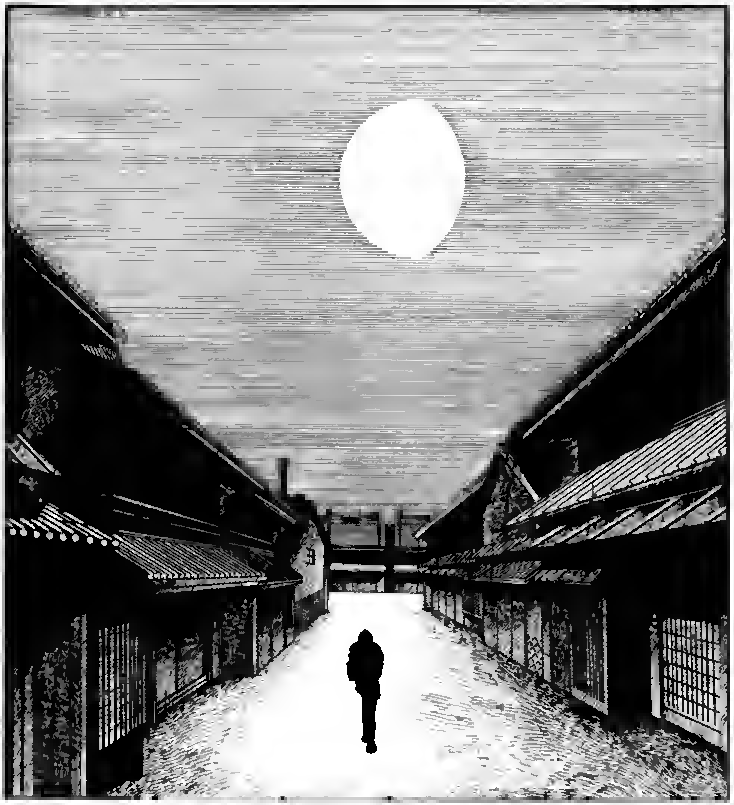

.....
The old Me ...!!
Thirty ryo would be next to nothing For the old Me...
Thirty ryo...!!
I can't let that dirty old Man make such a beautiful woman his For a measly thirty ryo. .!!
Dammit, I need money...

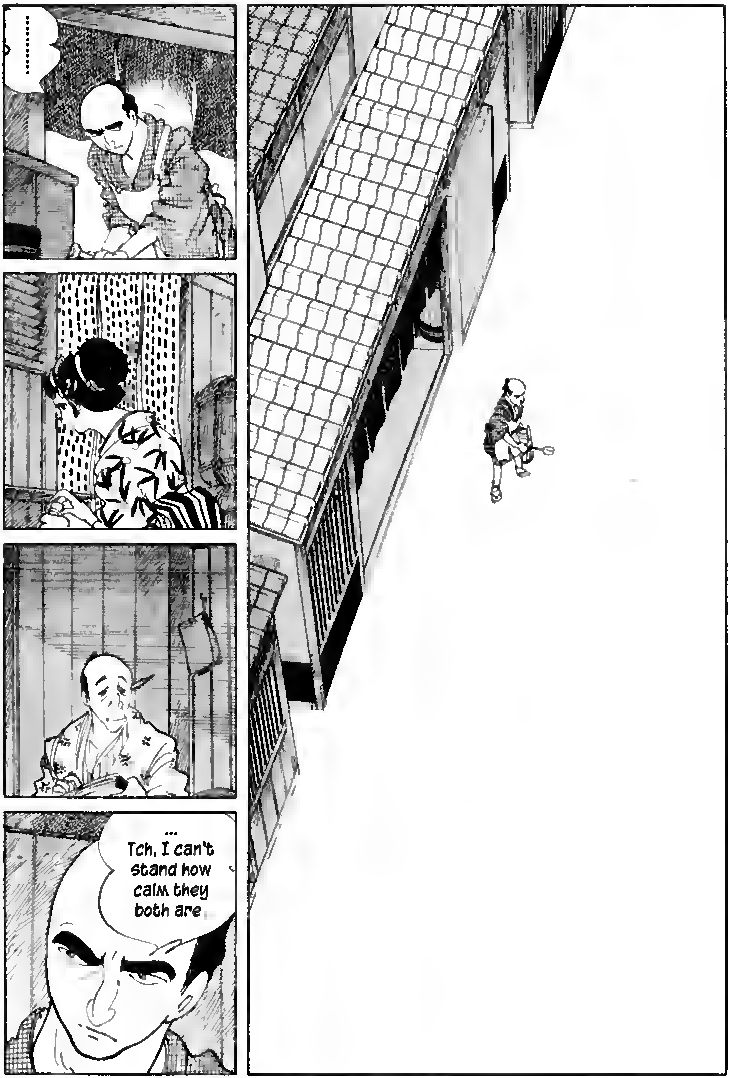
.....
Tch!!
...So, Seiji the Owl returns!!
For the past three years, I have been the honest and respectable Seiji of Maedaya. .!!
I thought I was done. I thought I had gone clean
Tch... I have no choice
I'm not stealing money for myself!!
I'm stealing it for the poor girl... that I'm in love with!!


And I will steal from the greedy merchants!!
I'd sure love to see.
Heh!!
They all think that they can do anything with money!!

Sakakiya's face... when his money is returned to him tomorrow...
and he is none the wiser!!


G—God-dam-mit!!
Nothing came of that. Nothing at all...
All I have left in my pouch is five ryo...!!

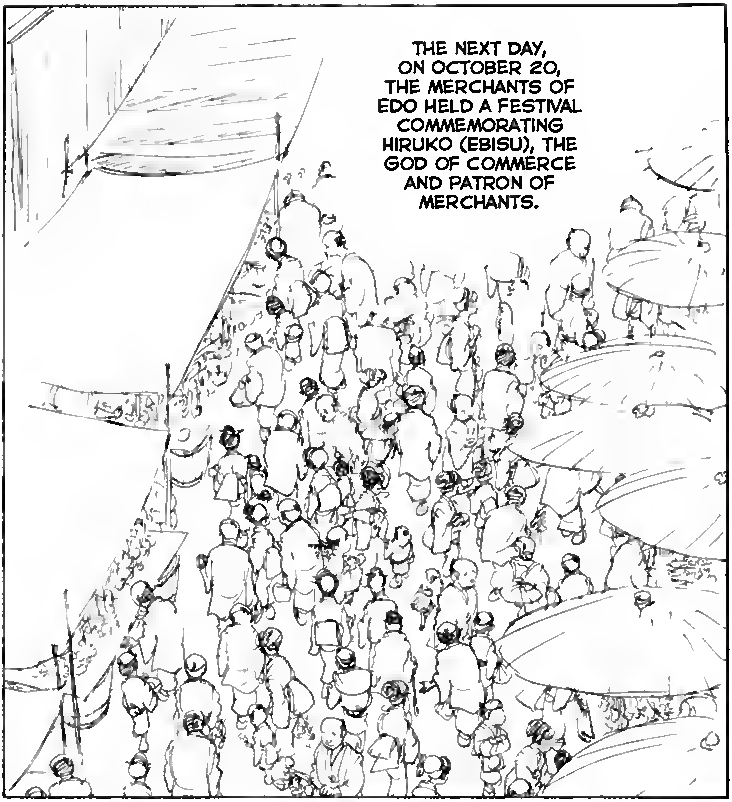



.....
...
Tch, I can't stand how calm they both are

And here I am, worrying my ass off...
.....
...Yes, that is strange.
How strange. The sun's about to set any minute now... And Sakakiya's not here.
...The truth is, last night, Sakakiya's head clerk was killed by a thief breaking in...
Huh!?
So... Saka-kiya's...
Par-don me.
Oh... Is he here?

So, right before the head clerk was stabbed.
I see...
It's just I was supposed to meet with Sakakiya today, but he never showed up
Oh, uh, it's nothing...
What do you mean?
So we've split up tha investigation between thosa Sakakiya is close to and regular customers.
It seems he knew tha thief already.
Ha shou- "You're bad, ...!!"
Y-Yes!!
Could you come over here, Kiyo?
Hey!
Kiyo, did you step outside last night?
Yes.
It's a very small store, as you can see.
So, are you all tha people that run that store.?
Of course not. I...
Huh?

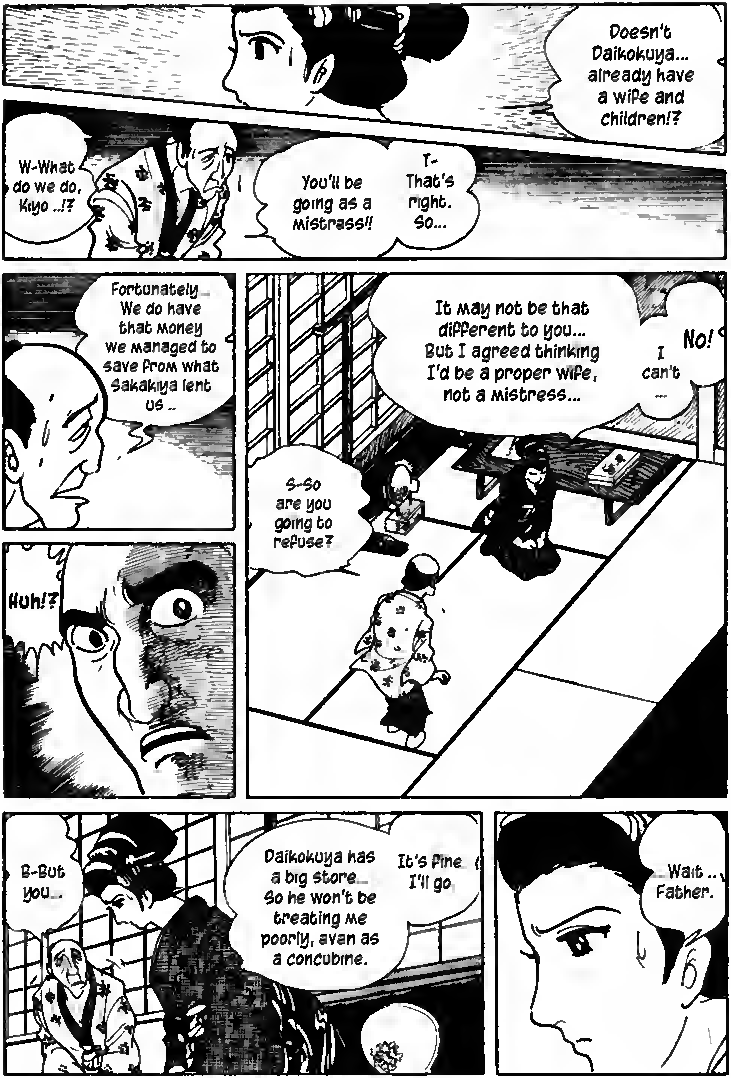
was sleeping the entire time.
...Sorry to bother you..
..Y-Yes!!
...The Bettara Market's tomorrow ...
That Man, Seiji..
I Feel like I've seen him before...
but I can't place him..!!


THE NEXT DAY, ON OCTOBER 20, THE MERCHANTS OF EDO HELD A FESTIVAL COMMEMORATING HIRUKO (EBISU), THE GOD OF COMMERCE AND PATRON OF MERCHANTS.

Kiyo, are you ready yet?

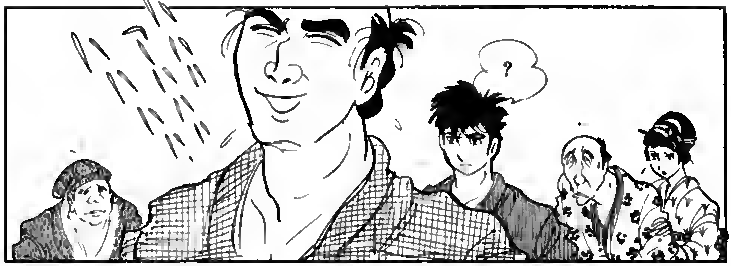
Just one second...
Par-don me
Actually, I wanted to ask you about this contract...
Oh... Well, well, if it isn't Daikokuya from Honcho...
What are you doing here ...?
Oh, nothing, Maedaya...
Just stopping by on the way from the Gettara Market.
Ah! T-That's
Saka-kiya's ...!?
.....
But he said that he got broken into, and the money he had ready was stolen.
I had lent a little bit of money to Sakakiya, with yesterday as the deadline.
Well you see...
Keh-he...

I have had an eye on your daughter for a long time...
Well, to be honest
So he made up for the loss... by giving this over to me!!
contracts and deadlines are just the same as money to us merchants...
But as you know very well,
So he didn't have enough money
P... Please, hold it one second...
I-I'll be right back...
He-he-he...
Hehhe...
Well, take your time.
What did you say!?


Doesn't Daikokuya... already have a wife and children!?
W-What do we do, Kiyo ..!?
You'll be going as a Mistress!!
T-That's right. So...
Fortunately... We do have that money we managed to save from what Sakakiya lent us ..
It may not be that different to you... But I agreed thinking I'd be a proper wife, not a Mistress...
No! I can't ...
S-So are you going to refuse?
Huh!?
B-But you...
Daikokuya has a big store... So he won't be treating me poorly, even as a concubine.
It's fine. I'll go.
...Wait... Father.

You really like Seiji, don't you ...?
I can't !!
If I'm with him, then this store is done for!
Heh... hehe...
Hehe he...
Haha-ha...
Haha...
S-Seiji, what on...!?
Excuse Me!!

ヒュン
シュッ
Kch!!
I came back to make sure of it, and..
You're Seiji the Owl after all!!
So!!
Heh... hehe...
stole things but didn't kill people. So why did you kill Sakakiya's head clerk..!?
that you...
B-But I'M sure...
.....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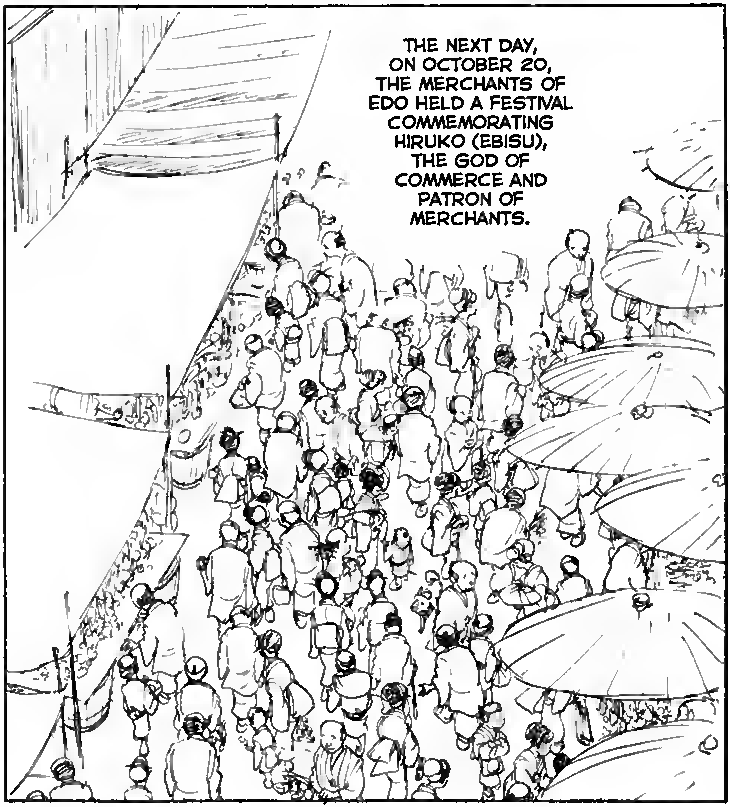

THE NEXT DAY, ON OCTOBER 20, THE MERCHANTS OF EDO HELD A FESTIVAL COMMEMORATING HIRUKO (EBISU), THE GOD OF COMMERCE AND PATRON OF MERCHANTS.

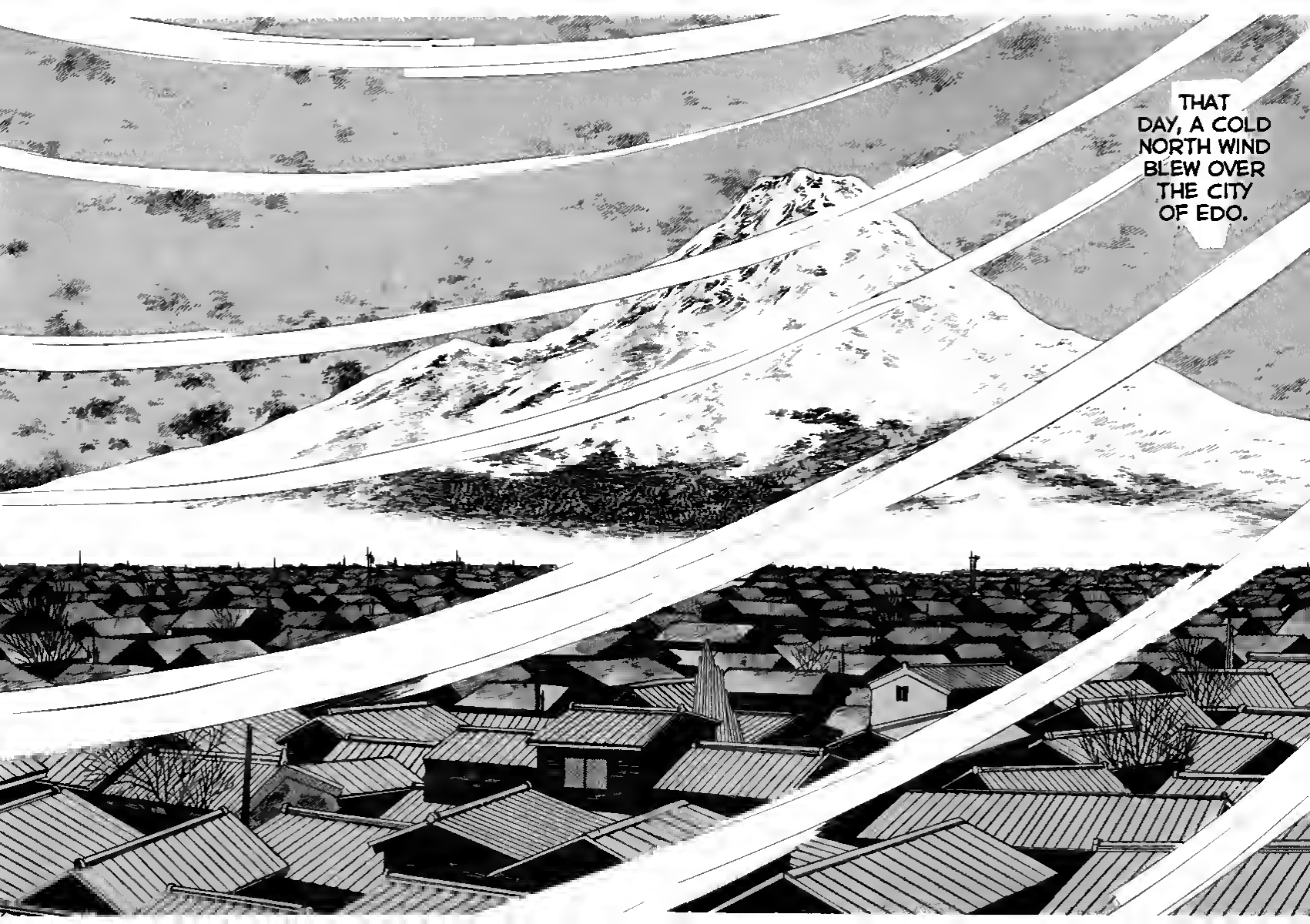
佐武と市捕物控

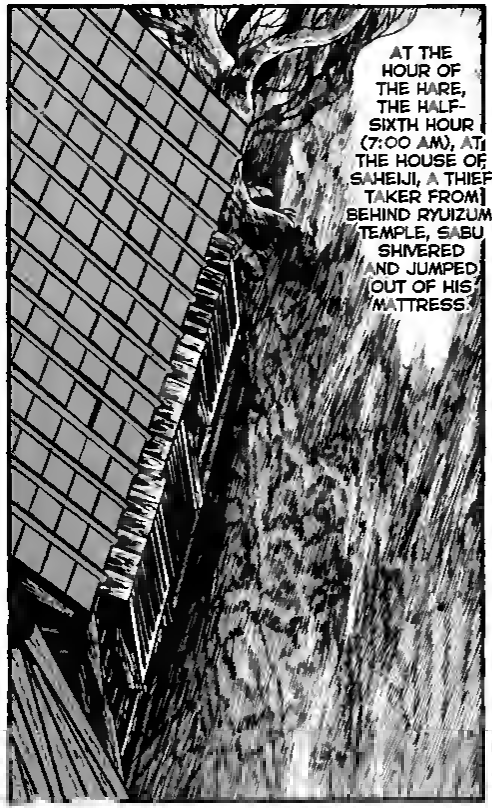
SABU & ICHI

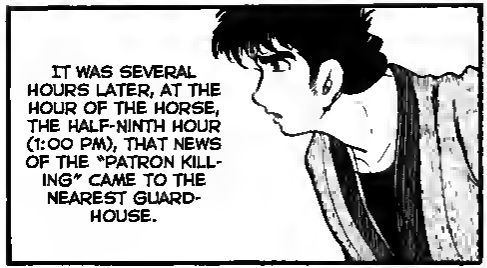
Chapter 13
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

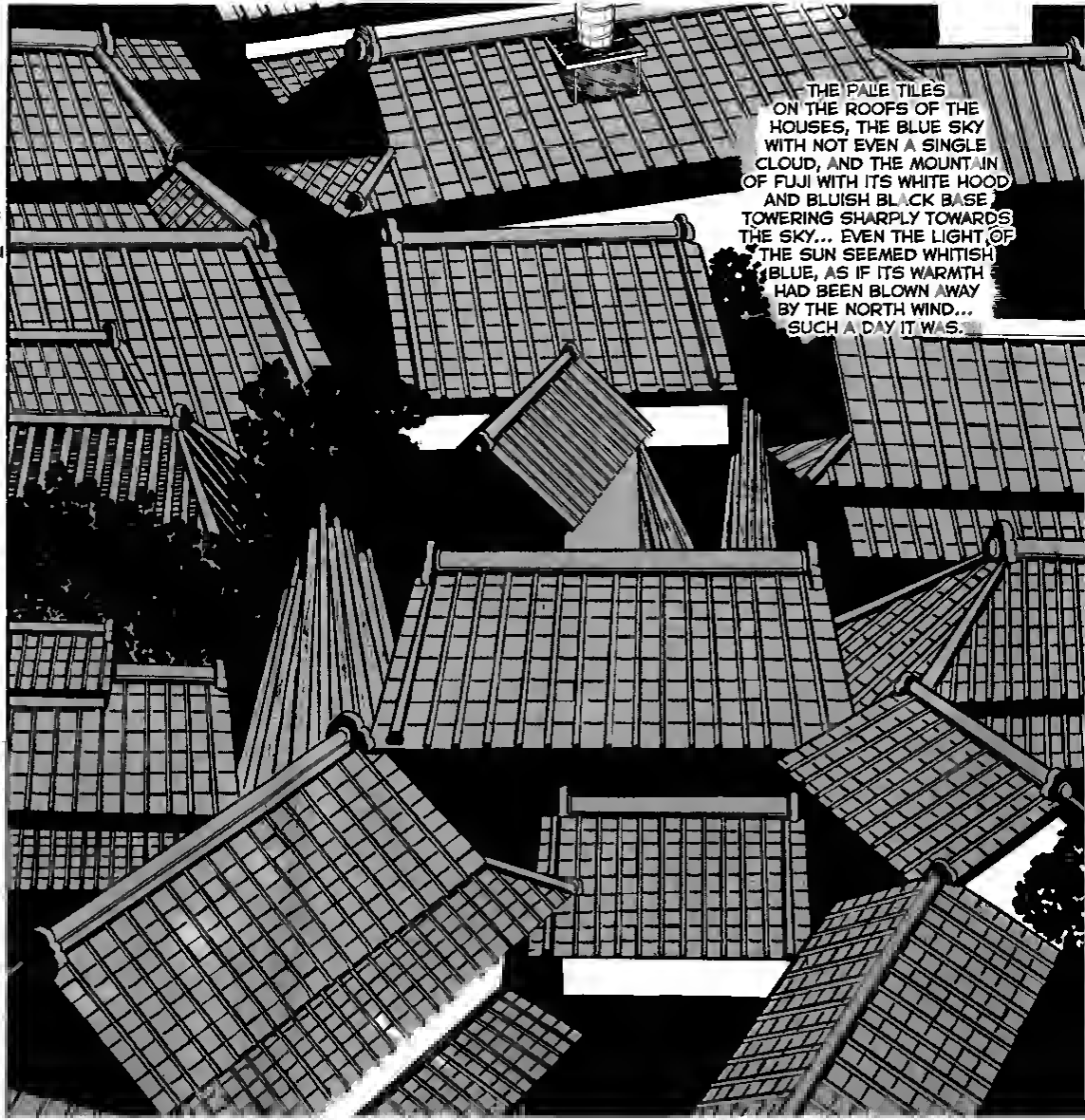
Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

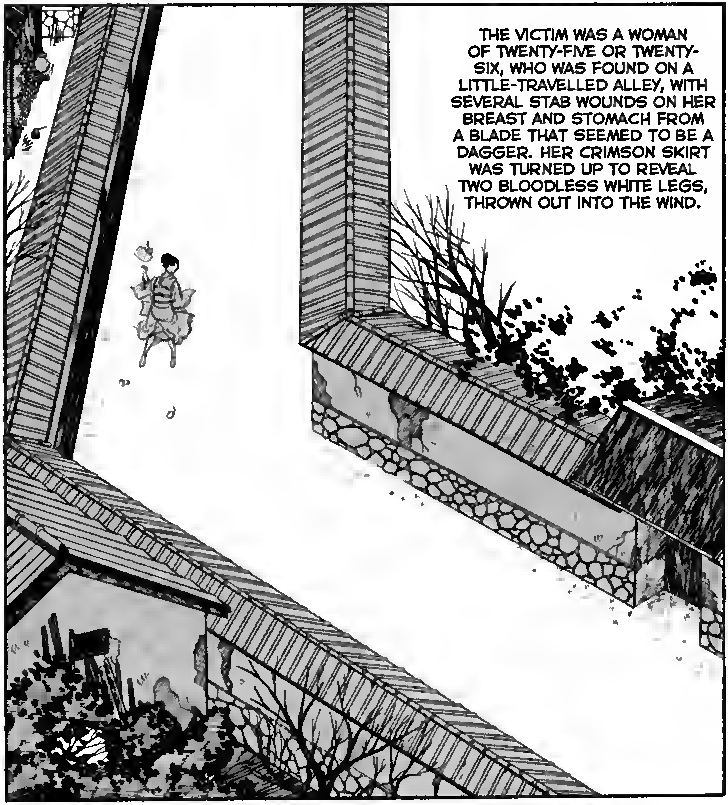
Chapter 14: Path of the North Wind


THAT DAY, A COLD NORTH WIND BLEW OVER THE CITY OF EDO.

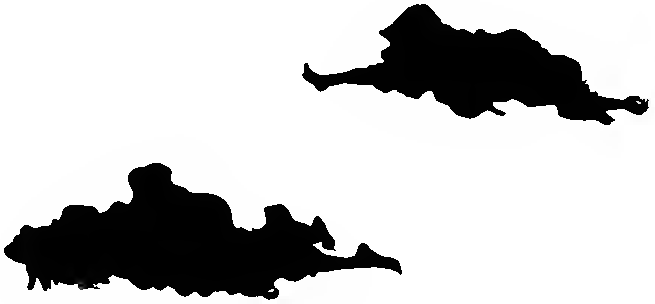

AT THE HOUR OF THE HARE, THE HALF-SIXTH HOUR (7:00 AM), AT THE HOUSE OF SAHEIJI, A THIEF TAKER FROM BEHIND RYUIZUMI TEMPLE, SABU SHIVERED AND JUMPED OUT OF HIS MATTRESS.


IT WAS SEVERAL HOURS LATER, AT THE HOUR OF THE HORSE, THE HALF-NINTH HOUR (1:00 PM), THAT NEWS OF THE "PATRON KILLING" CAME TO THE NEAREST GUARD-HOUSE.


THE PALE TILES ON THE ROOFS OF THE HOUSES, THE BLUE SKY WITH NOT EVEN A SINGLE CLOUD, AND THE MOUNTAIN OF FUJI WITH ITS WHITE HOOD AND BLUISH BLACK BASE TOWERING SHARPLY TOWARDS THE SKY... EVEN THE LIGHT OF THE SUN SEEMED WHITISH BLUE, AS IF ITS WARMTH HAD BEEN BLOWN AWAY BY THE NORTH WIND... SUCH A DAY IT WAS.

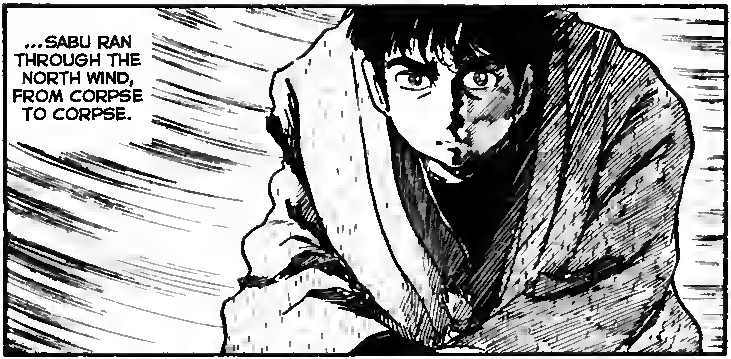

THE VICTIM WAS A WOMAN OF TWENTY-FIVE OR TWENTY-SIX, WHO WAS FOUND ON A LITTLE-TRAVELLED ALLEY, WITH SEVERAL STAB WOUNDS ON HER BREAST AND STOMACH FROM A BLADE THAT SEEMED TO BE A DAGGER. HER CRIMSON SKIRT WAS TURNED UP TO REVEAL TWO BLOODLESS WHITE LEGS, THROWN OUT INTO THE WIND.

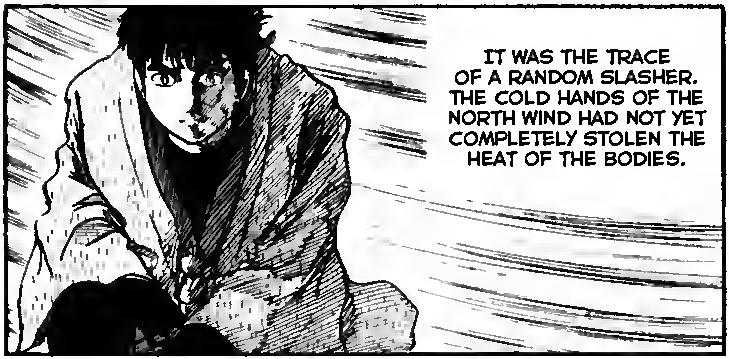
AS IF TO FOLLOW IT, AT THE EIGHTH HOUR (2:00 PM), THE "SECOND MURDER" WAS REPORTED.

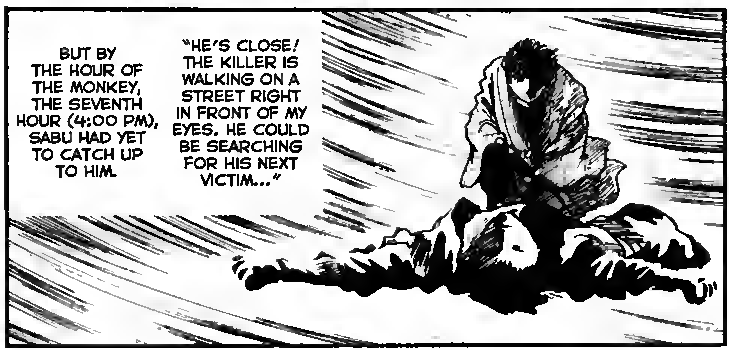


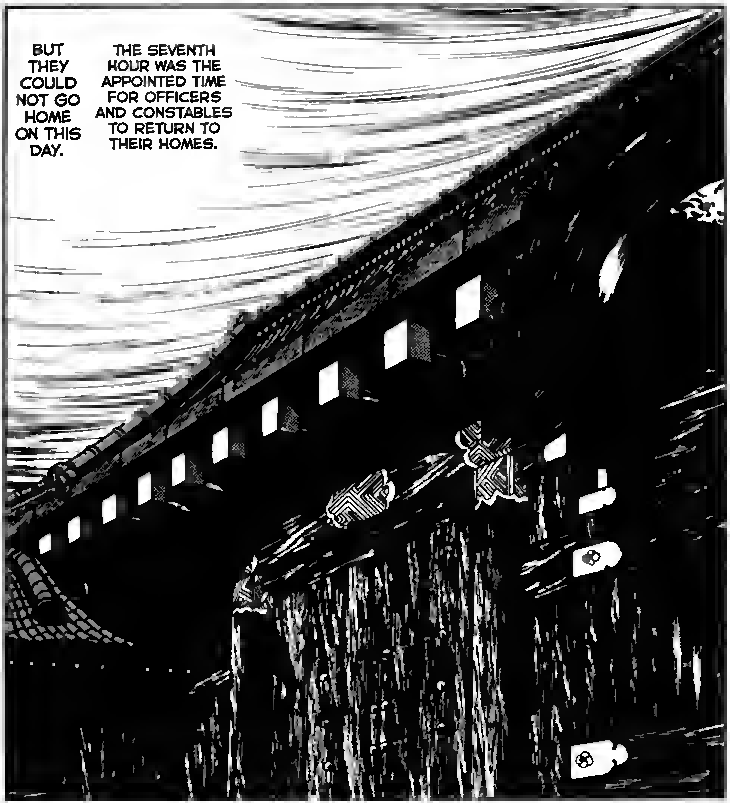
MINOWA TOWN, TOZEN TEMPLE, HASHIBA TOWN... IT WAS AS IF THE REAPER WERE RIDING THE NORTH WIND THROUGH THE CITY, FROM ROOFTOP TO ROOFTOP AND ROAD TO ROAD, TAKING LIVES ALONG THE WAY.

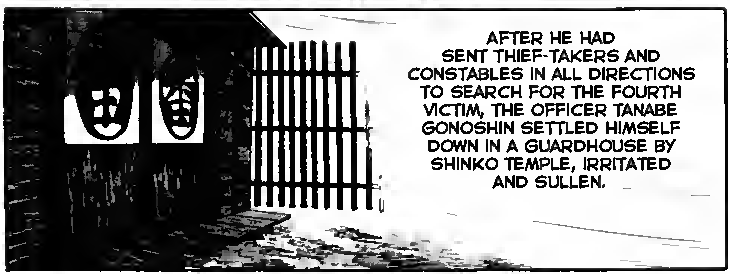
THE "THIRD AND FOURTH" VICTIMS WERE REPORTED SLIGHTLY BEFORE THE HALF-EIGHTH HOUR (3:00 PM).

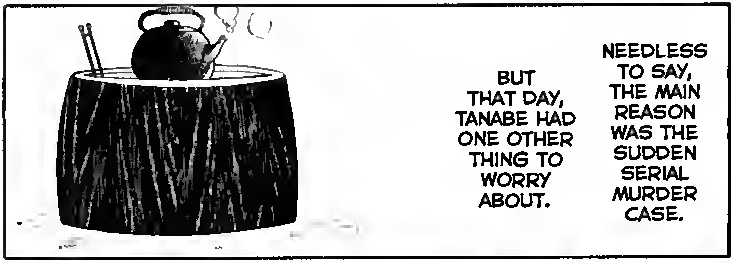

...SABU RAN THROUGH THE NORTH WIND, FROM CORPSE TO CORPSE.

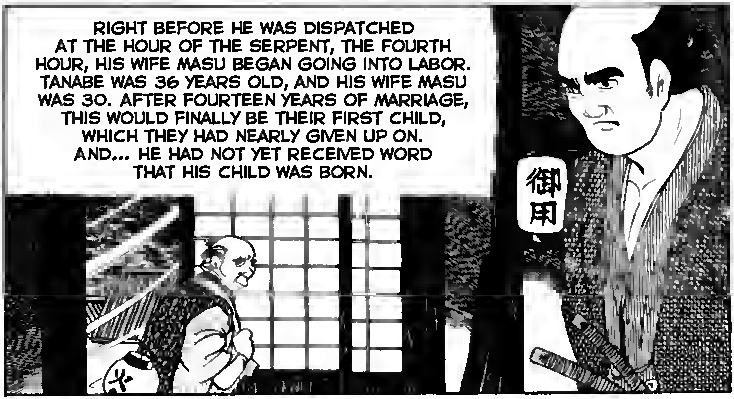

IT WAS THE TRACE OF A RANDOM SLASHER. THE COLD HANDS OF THE NORTH WIND HAD NOT YET COMPLETELY STOLEN THE HEAT OF THE BODIES.

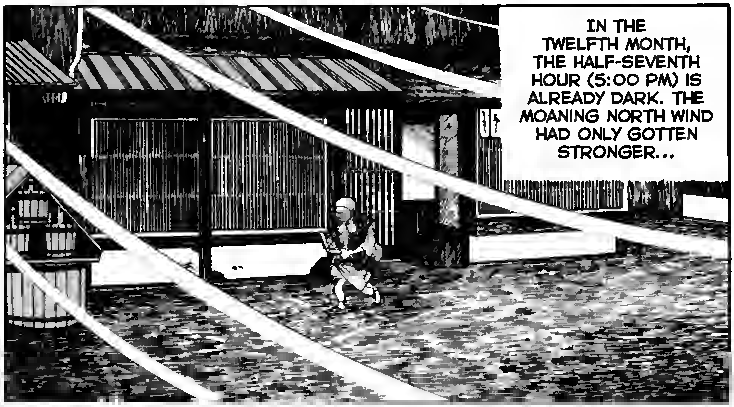

BUT BY THE HOUR OF THE MONKEY, THE SEVENTH HOUR (4:00 PM), SABU HAD YET TO CATCH UP TO HIM.
"HE'S CLOSE! THE KILLER IS WALKING ON A STREET RIGHT IN FRONT OF MY EYES. HE COULD BE SEARCHING FOR HIS NEXT VICTIM..."

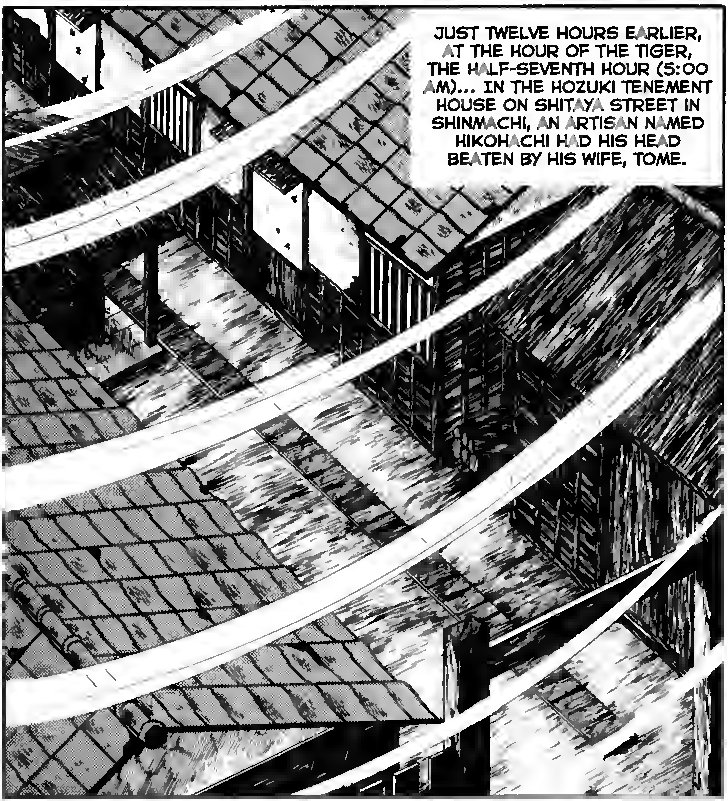

BUT THEY COULD NOT GO HOME ON THIS DAY.
THE SEVENTH HOUR WAS THE APPOINTED TIME FOR OFFICERS AND CONSTABLES TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES.


AFTER HE HAD SENT THIEF-TAKERS AND CONSTABLES IN ALL DIRECTIONS TO SEARCH FOR THE FOURTH VICTIM, THE OFFICER TANABE GONOSHIN SETTLED HIMSELF DOWN IN A GUARDHOUSE BY SHINKO TEMPLE, IRRITATED AND SULLEN.


BUT THAT DAY, TANABE HAD ONE OTHER THING TO WORRY ABOUT.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE MAIN REASON WAS THE SUDDEN SERIAL MURDER CASE.

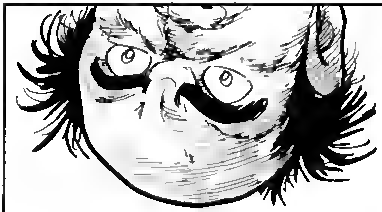

RIGHT BEFORE HE WAS DISPATCHED AT THE HOUR OF THE SERPENT, THE FOURTH HOUR, HIS WIFE MASU BEGAN GOING INTO LABOR. TANABE WAS 36 YEARS OLD, AND HIS WIFE MASU WAS 30. AFTER FOURTEEN YEARS OF MARRIAGE, THIS WOULD FINALLY BE THEIR FIRST CHILD, WHICH THEY HAD NEARLY GIVEN UP ON. AND... HE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED WORD THAT HIS CHILD WAS BORN.
御用
火


IN THE TWELFTH MONTH, THE HALF-SEVENTH HOUR (5:00 PM) IS ALREADY DARK. THE MOANING NORTH WIND HAD ONLY GOTTEN STRONGER...


JUST TWELVE HOURS EARLIER, AT THE HOUR OF THE TIGER, THE HALF-SEVENTH HOUR (5:00 AM)... IN THE HOZUKI TENEMENT HOUSE ON SHITAYA STREET IN SHINMACHI, AN ARTISAN NAMED HIKOHACHI HAD HIS HEAD BEATEN BY HIS WIFE, TOME.

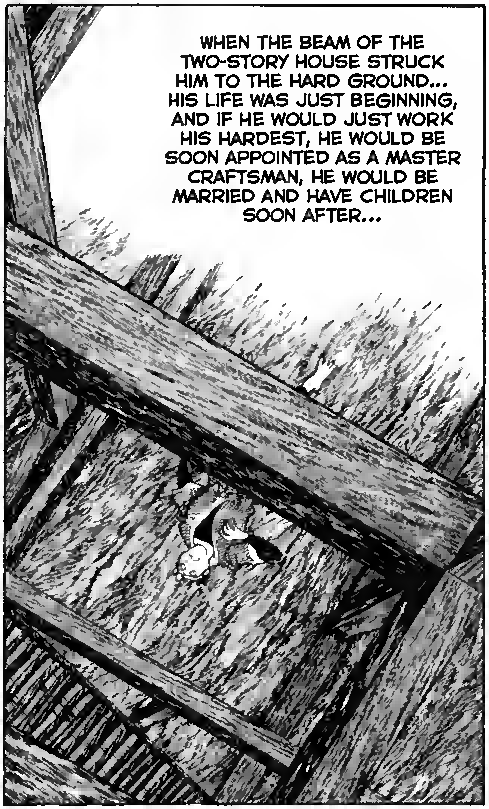
TOME WAS TRYING TO WAKE HIM, BECAUSE HE HAD TO BE AT THE "SCENE" BY THE HOUR OF THE RABBIT, THE SIXTH HOUR (6:00 AM).

BUT HIKOHACHI SIMPLY LIFTED HIS LIGHT MATTRESS ABOVE HIS HEAD, AND SHOWED NO SIGNS OF WAKING... HE HAD BEEN DRINKING LATE LAST NIGHT.
...HIS HEAD HURT. HE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE HIS WARM MATTRESS TO GO OUT INTO THE COLD NORTH WIND. BUT WHAT WAS KEEPING HIKOHACHI FROM LEAVING HIS MATTRESS EVEN MORE WAS TODAY'S "WORKPLACE".
SENZO'S BUILDING PLOT...



WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, HIKOHACHI WAS A CARPENTER.

OF COURSE, HE STILL CLAIMED TO BE ONE, BUT HE WAS ONLY ALLOWED TO DO SPADE WORK... BECAUSE HIS LEGS WERE CRIPPLED...



WHEN THE BEAM OF THE TWO-STORY HOUSE STRUCK HIM TO THE HARD GROUND... HIS LIFE WAS JUST BEGINNING, AND IF HE WOULD JUST WORK HIS HARDEST, HE WOULD BE SOON APPOINTED AS A MASTER CRAFTSMAN, HE WOULD BE MARRIED AND HAVE CHILDREN SOON AFTER...

HE FELL VICTIM TO DESPAIR, TOOK UP DRINKING AND GAMBLING... AND FAILED IN HIS WORK.

FOR HIS CHILD THAT HAD BEEN BORN, FOR HIS WIFE, FOR THE NEXT CHILD TO BE BORN, AND FOR HIMSELF... TO FEED A FAMILY OF FOUR...

BUT HE STILL HAD TO WORK.

HE WOULD CONSTANTLY BOTCH AND LOSE ALL THE "HALF-JOBS" THAT HIS FORMER BOSSES AND ACQUAINTANCES WHO TOOK PITY ON HIM AND WOULD GIVE HIM.

HIKOHACHI'S PATH WAS A DARK ONE, WHERE THE NORTH WIND BLEW AND THE SUN NEVER SHONE.

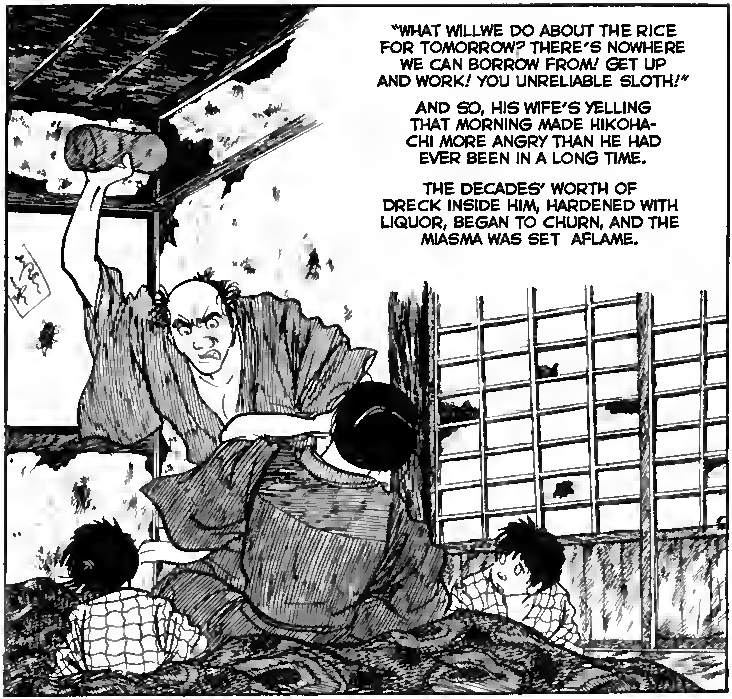
HE WOULD PUT ON A FLATTERING SMILE, KEEP HIS HEAD LOW IN SERVILITY, AND WALK FROM WORKSITE TO WORKSITE TAKING HALF-JOBS, UNTIL HE BECAME A LAUGHINGSTOCK.

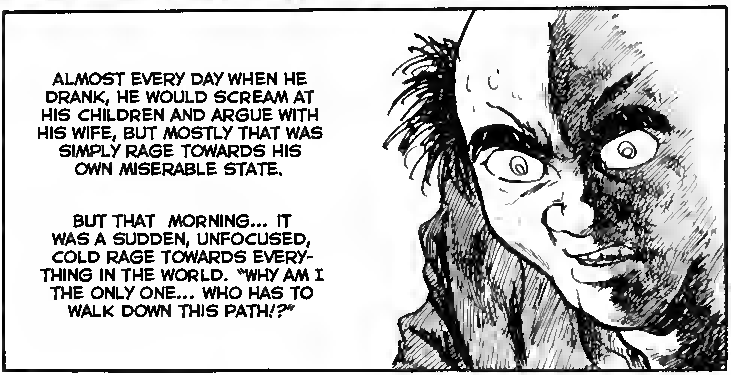
HIS ENVIOUS AND PITCH-BLACK RAGE TOWARDS HIS MISFORTUNE AND BAD LUCK THEN TURNED TO RESIGNATION, AND HIS RESIGNATION TO MEANNESS, MELANCHOLY, AND COMPLAINING, UNTIL HIKOHACHI WAS NO LONGER HIMSELF.

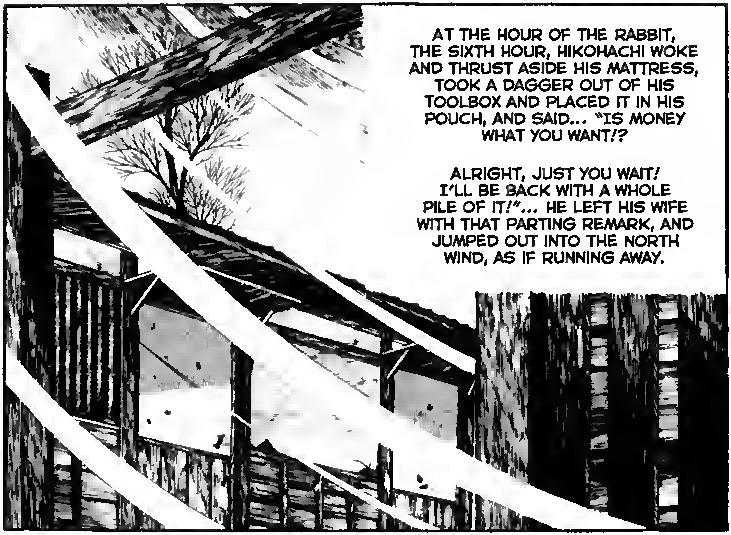
BUT TO WORK AT HIS OLD FOREMAN'S PLACE, AND WORK UNDER HIS FORMER COWORKER ...!

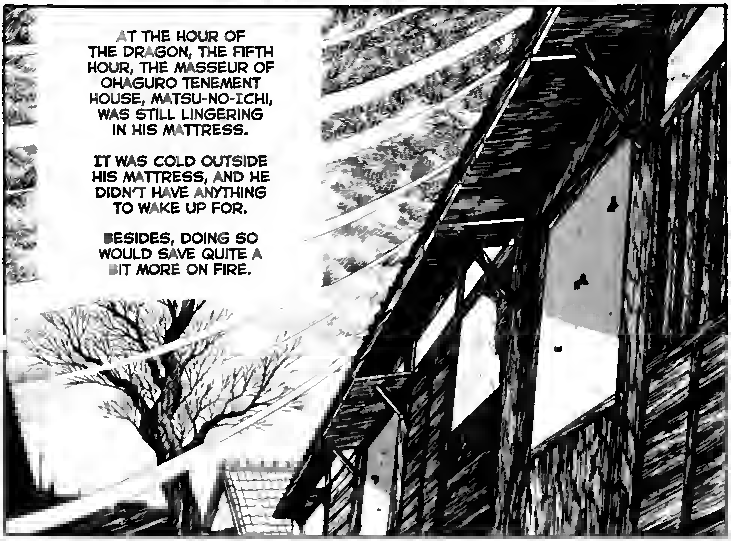
EVEN WHEN APPRENTICES YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE HIS CHILD ORDERED HIM TO DO THIS AND DO THAT, AND FORCED SADISTIC ERRANDS ON HIM, HE COULD FORGET ABOUT IT BY CRAWLING INTO A BOTTLE. (BUT THAT WOULD ONLY MAKE IT SINK INTO THE REST OF THE SLUDGE IN HIS STOMACH.)

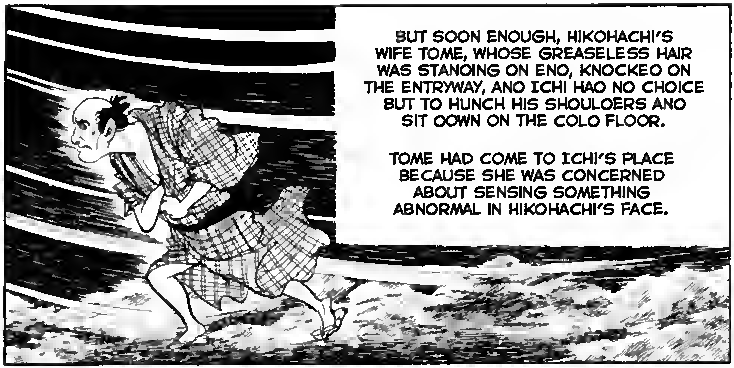
BUT EVEN STILL, HE COULD ONLY BEAR TO WORK AT PLACES WHERE NO ONE KNEW OF HIS PAST.

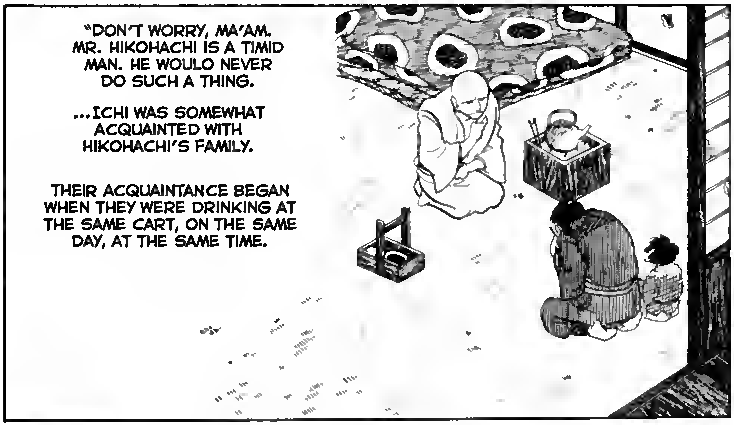

"WHAT WILLWE DO ABOUT THE RICE FOR TOMORROW? THERE'S NOWHERE WE CAN BORROW FROM! GET UP AND WORK! YOU UNRELIABLE SLOTH!"
AND SO, HIS WIFE'S YELLING THAT MORNING MADE HIKOHACHI MORE ANGRY THAN HE HAD EVER BEEN IN A LONG TIME.
THE DECADES' WORTH OF DRECK INSIDE HIM, HARDENED WITH LIQUOR, BEGAN TO CHURN, AND THE MIASMA WAS SET AFLAME.

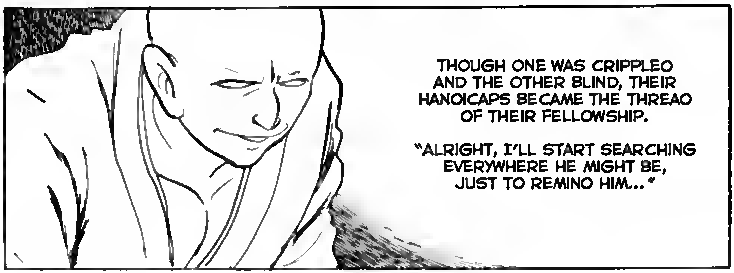

ALMOST EVERY DAY WHEN HE DRANK, HE WOULD SCREAM AT HIS CHILDREN AND ARGUE WITH HIS WIFE, BUT MOSTLY THAT WAS SIMPLY RAGE TOWARDS HIS OWN MISERABLE STATE.
BUT THAT MORNING... IT WAS A SUDDEN, UNFOCUSED, COLD RAGE TOWARDS EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD. "WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE... WHO HAS TO WALK DOWN THIS PATH!?"

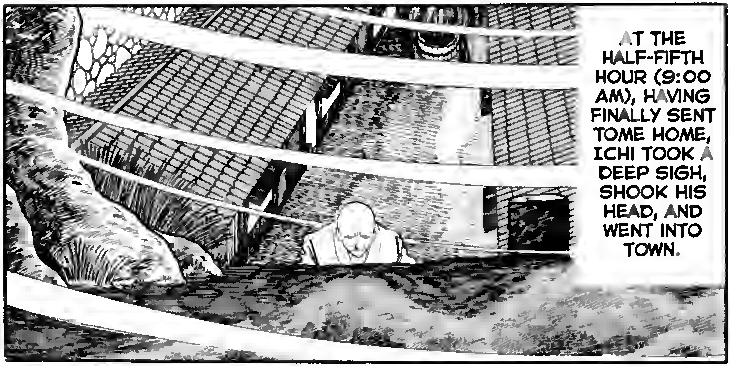

AT THE HOUR OF THE RABBIT, THE SIXTH HOUR, HIKOHACHI WOKE AND THRUST ASIDE HIS MATTRESS, TOOK A DAGGER OUT OF HIS TOOLBOX AND PLACED IT IN HIS POUCH, AND SAID... "IS MONEY WHAT YOU WANT!?
ALRIGHT, JUST YOU WAIT! I'LL BE BACK WITH A WHOLE PILE OF IT!"... HE LEFT HIS WIFE WITH THAT PARTING REMARK, AND JUMPED OUT INTO THE NORTH WIND, AS IF RUNNING AWAY.

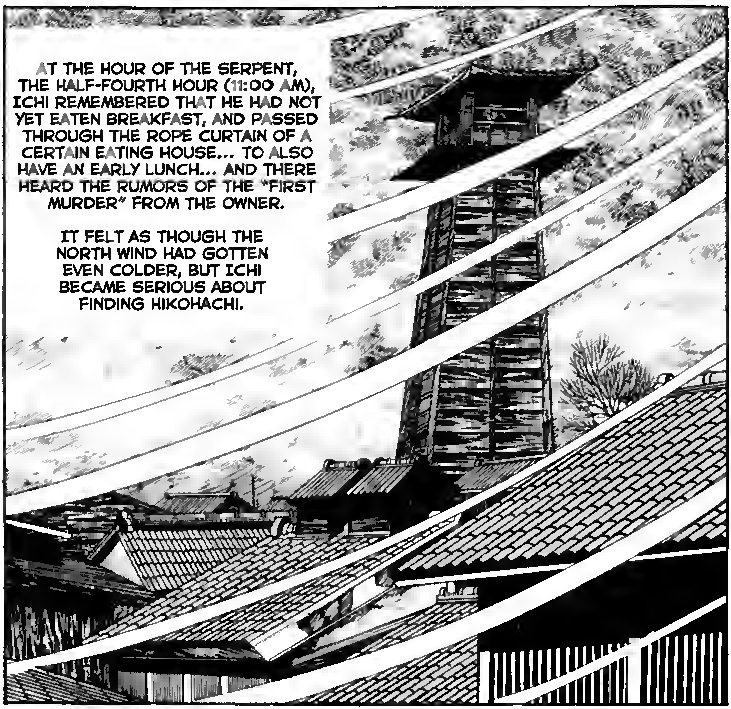

AT THE HOUR OF THE DRAGON, THE FIFTH HOUR, THE MASSEUR OF OHAGURO TENEMENT HOUSE, MATSU-NO-ICHI, WAS STILL LINGERING IN HIS MATTRESS.
IT WAS COLD OUTSIDE HIS MATTRESS, AND HE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WAKE UP FOR.
BESIDES, DOING SO WOULD SAVE QUITE A BIT MORE ON FIRE.

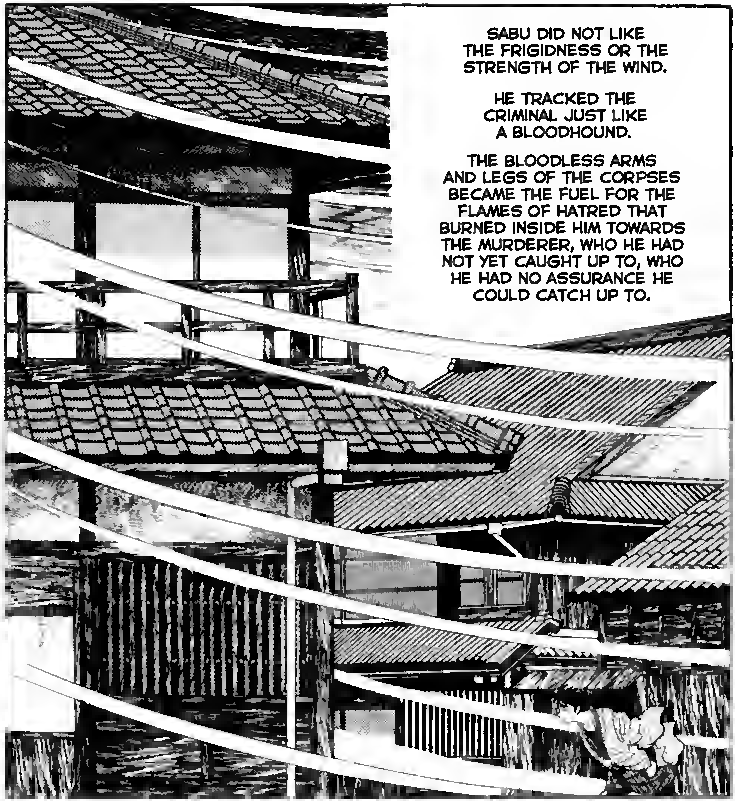

BUT SOON ENOUGH, HIKOHACHI'S WIFE TOME, WHOSE GREASELESS HAIR WAS STANDING ON END, KNOCKED ON THE ENTRYWAY, AND ICHI HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO HUNCH HIS SHOULDERS AND SIT DOWN ON THE COLD FLOOR.
TOME HAD COME TO ICHI'S PLACE BECAUSE SHE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SENSING SOMETHING ABNORMAL IN HIKOHACHI'S FACE.

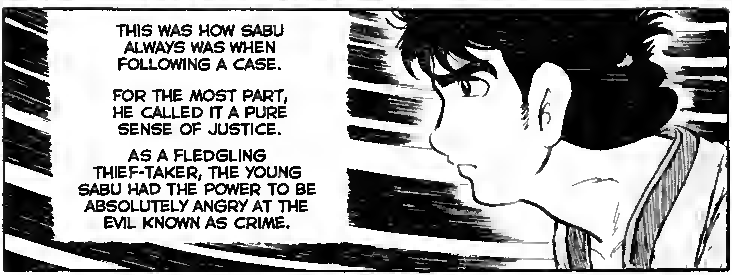

"DON'T WORRY, MA'AM. MR. HIKOHACHI IS A TIMID MAN. HE WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING.
...ICHI WAS SOMEWHAT ACQUAINTED WITH HIKOHACHI'S FAMILY.
THEIR ACQUAINTANCE BEGAN WHEN THEY WERE DRINKING AT THE SAME CART, ON THE SAME DAY, AT THE SAME TIME.

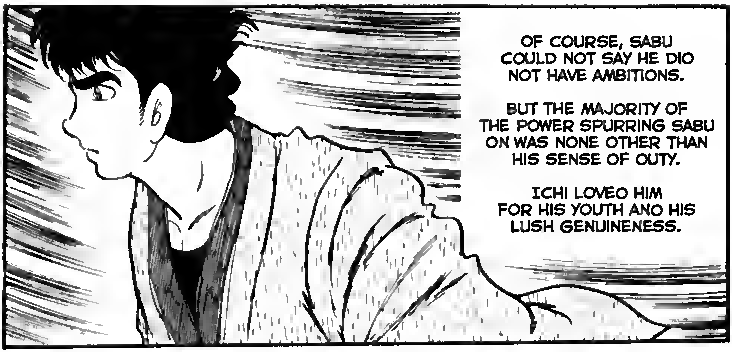

THOUGH ONE WAS CRIPPLED AND THE OTHER BLIND, THEIR HANDICAPS BECAME THE THREAD OF THEIR FELLOWSHIP.
"ALRIGHT, I'LL START SEARCHING EVERYWHERE HE MIGHT BE, JUST TO REMIND HIM..."

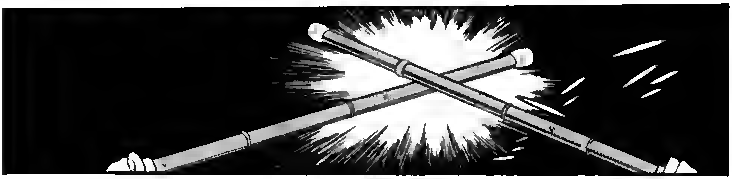

AT THE HALF-FIFTH HOUR (9:00 AM), HAVING FINALLY SENT TOME HOME, ICHI TOOK A DEEP SIGH, SHOOK HIS HEAD, AND WENT INTO TOWN.

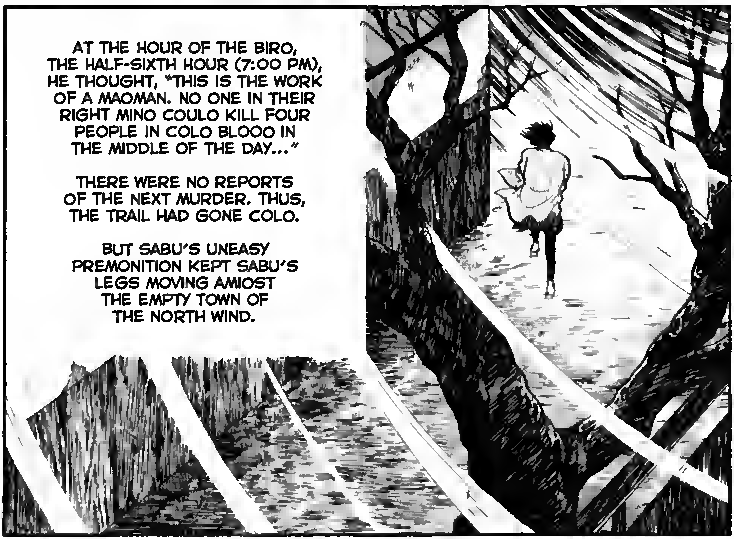

AT THE HOUR OF THE SERPENT, THE HALF-FOURTH HOUR (11:00 AM), ICHI REMEMBERED THAT HE HAD NOT YET EATEN BREAKFAST, AND PASSED THROUGH THE ROPE CURTAIN OF A CERTAIN EATING HOUSE... TO ALSO HAVE AN EARLY LUNCH... AND THERE HEARD THE RUMORS OF THE "FIRST MURDER" FROM THE OWNER.
IT FELT AS THOUGH THE NORTH WIND HAD GOTTEN EVEN COLDER, BUT ICHI BECAME SERIOUS ABOUT FINDING HIKOHACHI.


SABU DID NOT LIKE THE FRIGIDNESS OR THE STRENGTH OF THE WIND.
HE TRACKED THE CRIMINAL JUST LIKE A BLOODHOUND.
THE BLOODLESS ARMS AND LEGS OF THE CORPSES BECAME THE FUEL FOR THE FLAMES OF HATRED THAT BURNED INSIDE HIM TOWARDS THE MURDERER, WHO HE HAD NOT YET CAUGHT UP TO, WHO HE HAD NO ASSURANCE HE COULD CATCH UP TO.

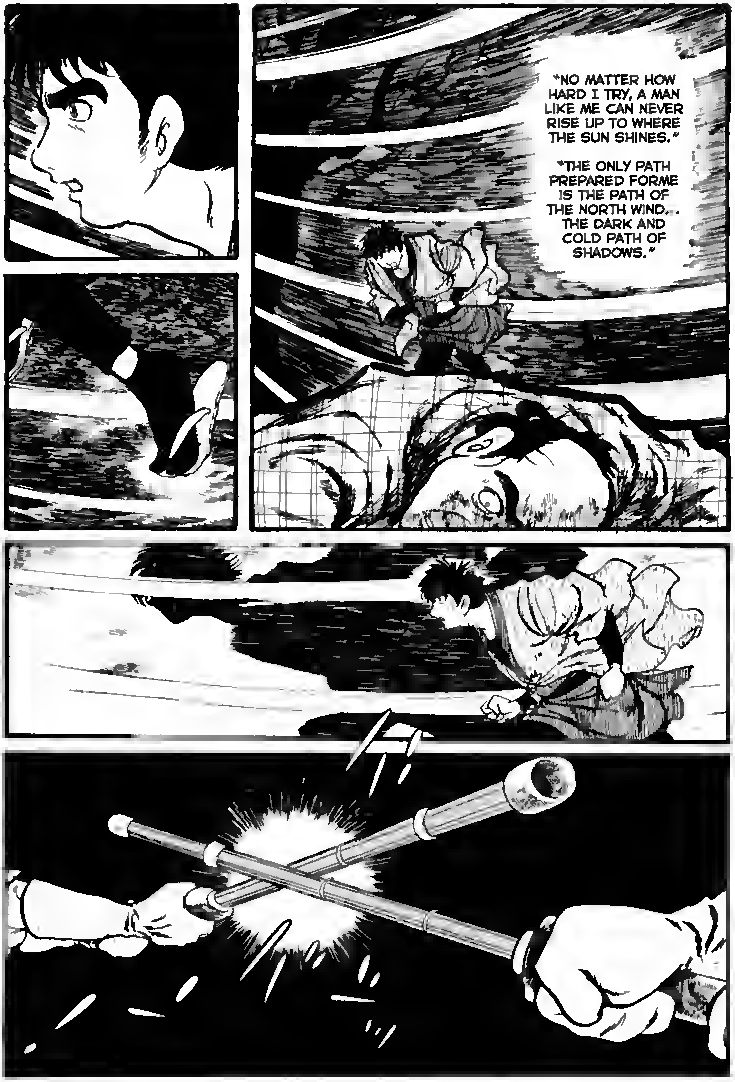

THIS WAS HOW SABU ALWAYS WAS WHEN FOLLOWING A CASE.
FOR THE MOST PART, HE CALLED IT A PURE SENSE OF JUSTICE.
AS A FLEDGLING THIEF-TAKER, THE YOUNG SABU HAD THE POWER TO BE ABSOLUTELY ANGRY AT THE EVIL KNOWN AS CRIME.


OF COURSE, SABU COULD NOT SAY HE DIO NOT HAVE AMBITIONS.
BUT THE MAJORITY OF THE POWER SPURRING SABU ON WAS NONE OTHER THAN HIS SENSE OF OUTY.
ICHI LOVEO HIM FOR HIS YOUTH ANO HIS LUSH GENUINENESS.




AT THE HOUR OF THE BIRO, THE HALF-SIXTH HOUR (7:00 PM), HE THOUGHT, "THIS IS THE WORK OF A MAOMAN. NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MINO COULO KILL FOUR PEOPLE IN COLO BLOOO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY..."
THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF THE NEXT MURDER. THUS, THE TRAIL HAD GONE COLO.
BUT SABU'S UNEASY PREMONITION KEPT SABU'S LEGS MOVING AMIOST THE EMPTY TOWN OF THE NORTH WIND.

"I'M AN UN-FORT-UNATE MAN."
Gyaaaaaaaah!


"NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, A MAN LIKE ME CAN NEVER RISE UP TO WHERE THE SUN SHINES."
"THE ONLY PATH PREPARED FORME IS THE PATH OF THE NORTH WIND... THE DARK AND COLD PATH OF SHADOWS."

"THAT'S JUST TOO UNBEARABLE! AND THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO PROVE THAT THERE ARE MEN LESS LUCKY THAN ME! SEE, HERE COMES ANOTHER UNLUCKY MAN."

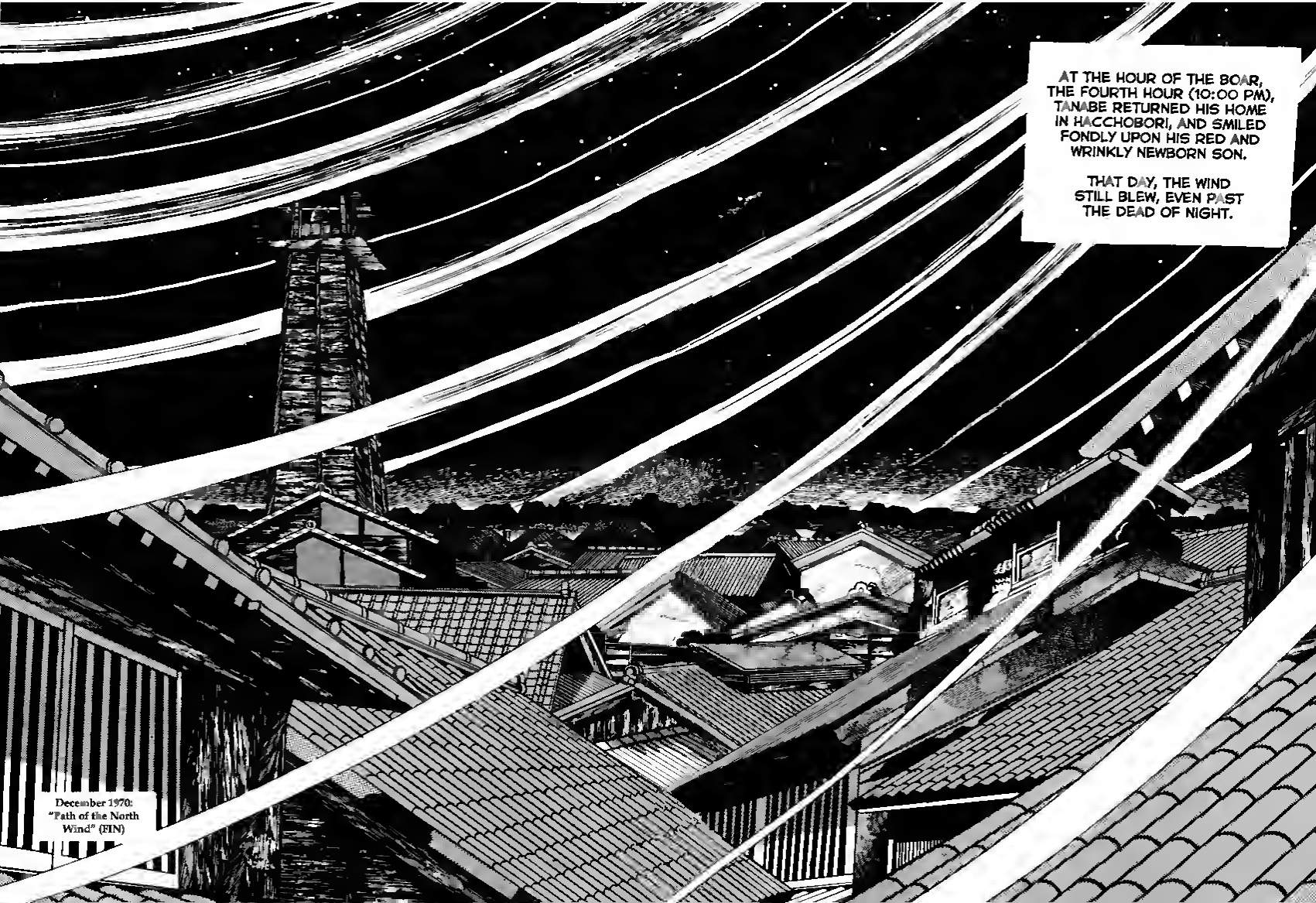
"I HAVE BEEN UNEMPLOYED FOR A LONG TIME.
"AND THAT IS ALL BECAUSE MY BAD LUCK RUINED MY STIPEND!"
Eek...
"I WAGERED ALL MY FINAL HOPES ON YESTERDAY'S ASSISTANT MASTER'S MATCH TO DECIDE ON THE SUCCESSOR OF THE SHIMADA DOJO.
"HAD I WON THAT MATCH, I COULD HAVE SAID FAREWELL TO THIS LIFE AS A DOJO MASTER!"

"BUT I WAS DEFEATED/ AND I HAD TRAINED MANY TIMES MORE THAN HE DID!
"AND HE WAS AN AVERAGE MAN WITH A RESPECTABLE STIPEND, WITH NOTHING TO HINDER HIS LIFESTYLE!"

"THAT'S RIGHT. IN THE END... THERE ARE ONLY TWO PATHS IN THIS WORLD.
"THE PATH THE SUN SHINES ON AND THE PATH OF THE NORTH WIND...
"AND EVERY MAN IS DESTINED TO WALK DOWN ONE OF THESE PATHS FROM BIRTH."

"I COULD NEVER BECOME THE BEST. I WAS ALWAYS SECOND-BEST."
A... Awawa... I-I-Ichi!
...Go back home, Hiko.
Your wife is worried about you!

You Dumb-ass!!
Shut your flippant mouth!!
N-No, I can't go on!
I have no luck. Nothing I do will...
You should be able to do anything if you have deathly resolve... But you can't even kill a single person because you lack that drive!!
You... are just a lazy coward who has done nothing but whine!
Only those who have done everything they could and still have no luck have right to say that!
.....


AT THE HOUR OF THE BOAR, THE FOURTH HOUR (10:00 PM), TANABE RETURNED HIS HOME IN HACCHOBORI, AND SMILED FONDLY UPON HIS RED AND WRINKLY NEWBORN SON.
THAT DAY, THE WIND STILL BLEW, EVEN PAST THE DEAD OF NIGHT.
December 1970: "Path of the North Wind" (FIN)

A note about time in the Edo Period

In ancient Japan, each day was divided into twelve "hours", which are usually the same length as two hours of the 24-hour clock, but can be longer or shorter depending on when the sun rises and sets. One system of time associates each of these "hours" with an animal of the Chinese Zodiac: the rat, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the ram, the monkey, the bird, the dog, and the boar. The other system numbers each of these "hours", counting down from nine to four, from midnight to noon and from noon to midnight. The halfway point of each "hour", which would be an hour of the 24-hour clock, would be marked by calling it the half hour. The Sixth Hour would always be defined by either the sunrise or the sunset; thus, the winter would have longer hours at night and shorter hours in the day, and the other way around in the summer.

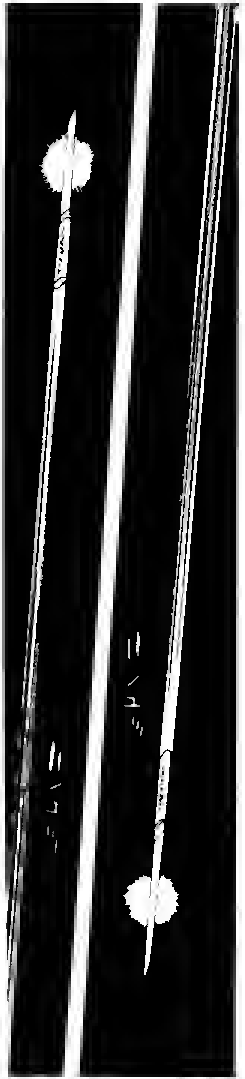
佐武と市捕物控

SABU & ICHI

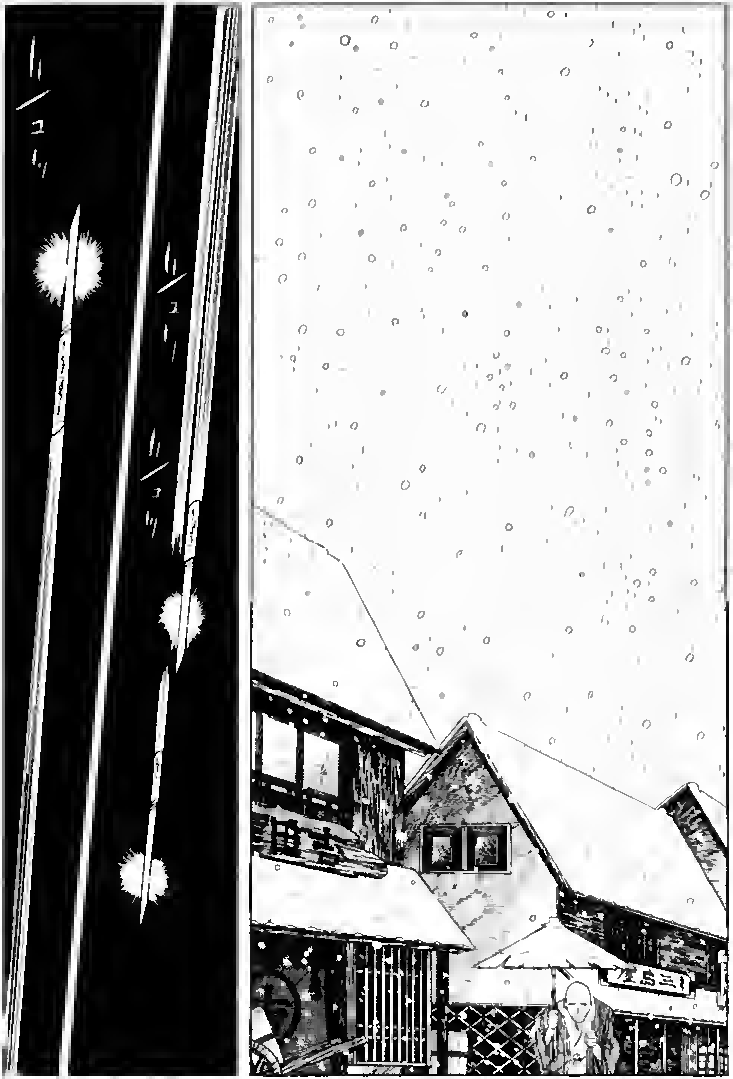
Chapter 14
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

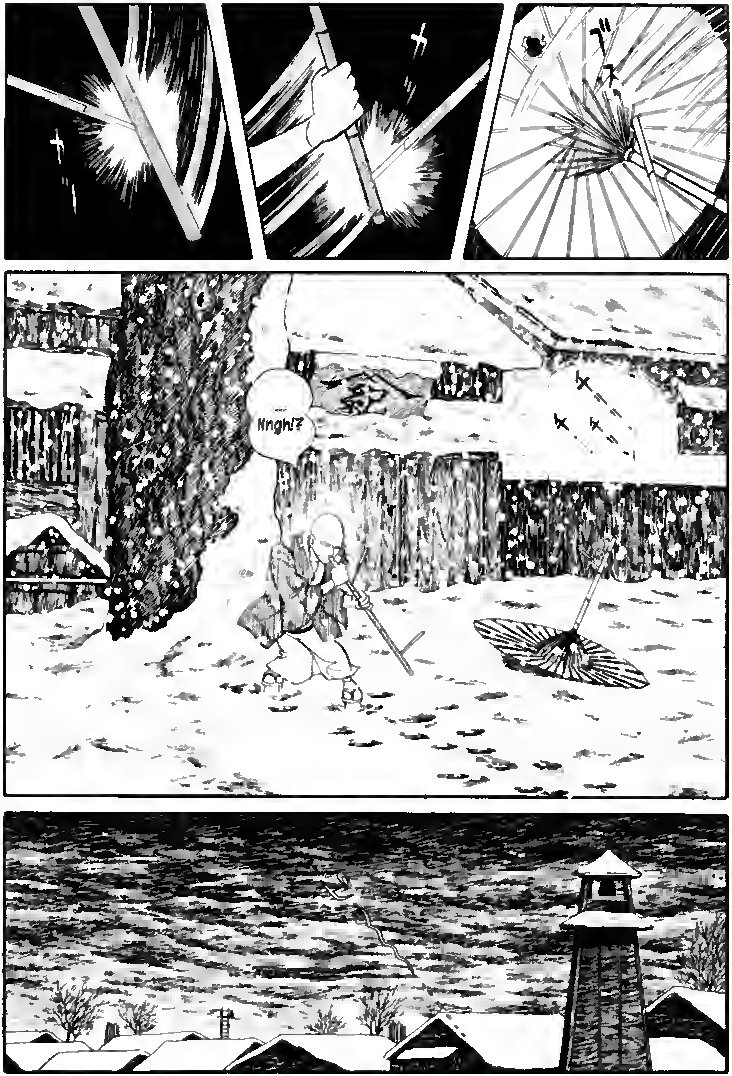
Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

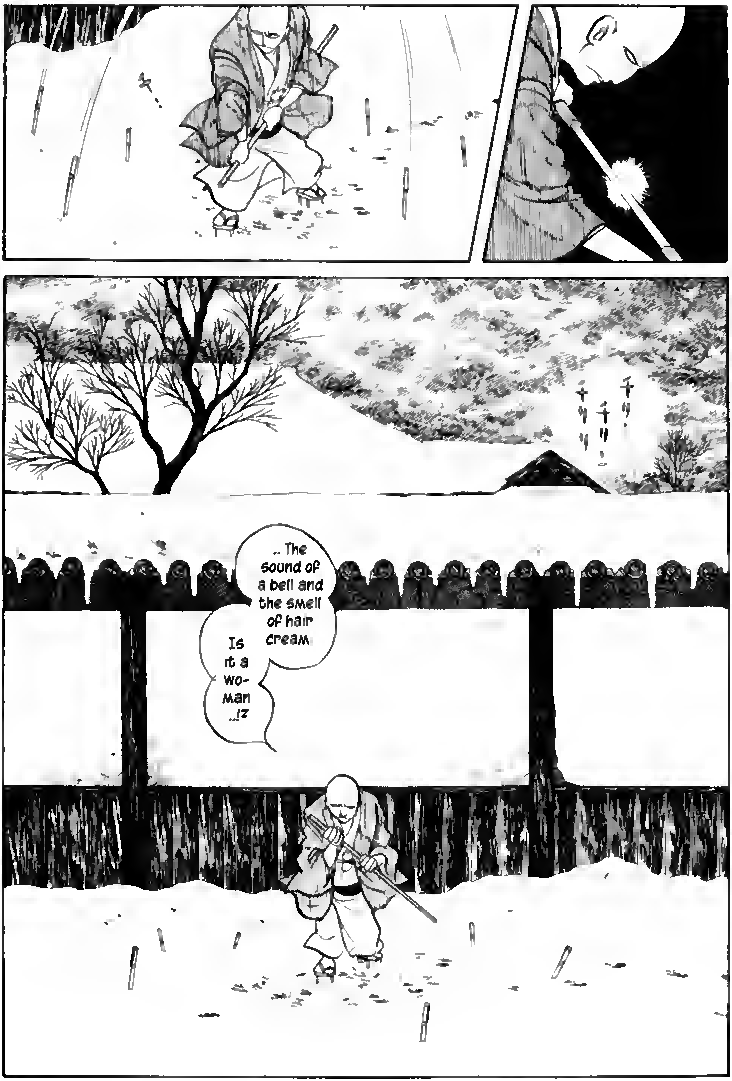
Chapter 15: Trap of Ice



Who's there!?
キリ
キリリ
キリ…




Knghl?


チリ
チリ
チリリ
.. The sound of a bell and the smell of hair cream
Is it a wo-man ..!?

I WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU. IF IT IS NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE, MAY I ASK YOU TO COME TO THE GINKGO TREE IN THE BENTEN SHRINE OF KANAME TOWN?
SABU, C/O MR. SAHEIJI ITOYA YOSHIHEI

Huh?
W...
Who's there!?

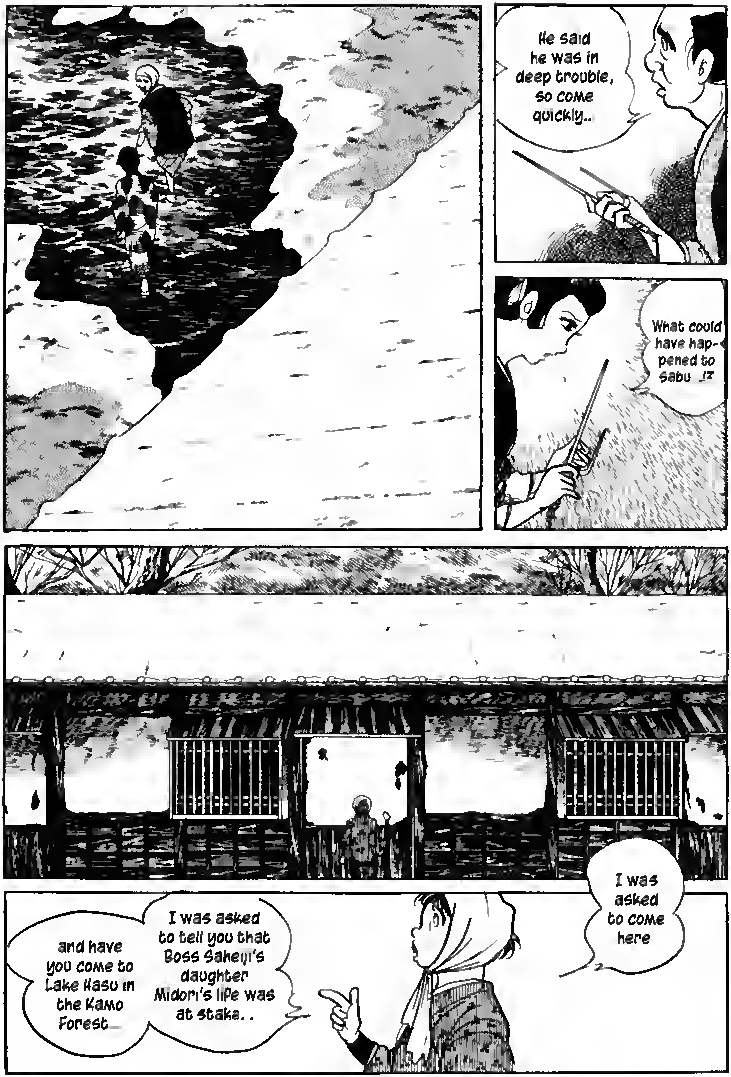
Damn
!!

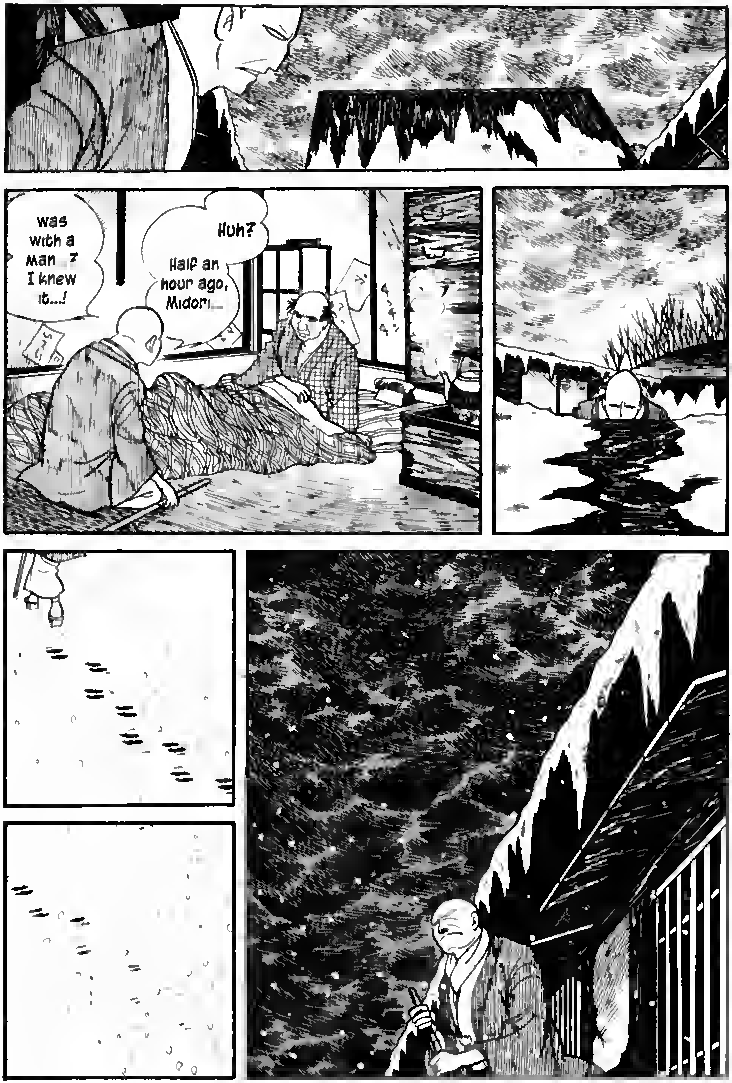
HMM ..!?
I- Itoya ...!?
H.. He's dead ..!!

Ah!
MY LADY MIDORI,
EVER SINCE THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU, I HAVE BEEN SO IN LOVE WITH YOU THAT I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT, BUT YOUR FAVORABLE ANSWER YESTERDAY HAS IMMERSED ME WITH JOY. AS YOU HAVE SAID, THERE IS ONLY ONE THING KEEPING US APART: THE SUBORDINATE LODGING IN YOUR HOUSE NAMED SABU. BUT I WILL BE DEALING WITH HIM SOON, SO PLEASE REST ASSURED AND WAIT FOR ME.
ITOYA YOSHIHEI
Hmm?
What's What this? happened here!?
.. Did you kill him!?
N-No, wait! This is actually ..
You!!

T-This is...
Will you show me that thing you have hidden in your pocket!?
Actually
Y-Yes, I did, but..
It looks like you have a truncheon
So hand it over right now.
Ungh
This guy just summoned me here this morning
W-Wait! That's not it!
Hear me out!
So, you murdered him because of your love affair...!
Oh, I see.
but too bad for you, I happened to stroll by on business...!
...I'm Yahachi of Mershin Bridge, and this may not be my assigned neighborhood...
I'll hear your excuse at the nearby guardhouse

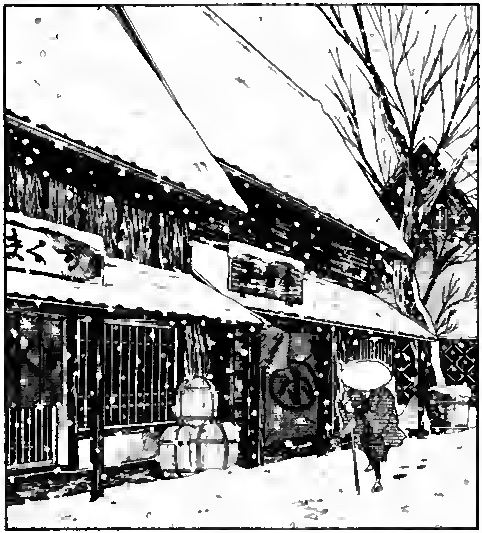
Yes?
Excuse me, but... Are you Midori...?
See... A young man named Sabu asked me to pass this message along to you...
Huh?

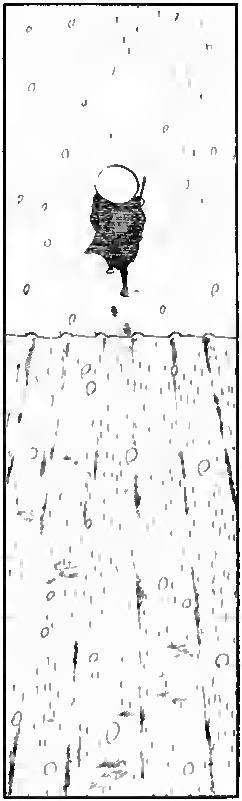

He said he was in deep trouble, so come quickly..
What could have happened to Sabu..!?
I was asked to come here
I was asked to tell you that Boss Saheiji's daughter Midori's life was at stake..
and have you come to Lake Nasu in the Kamo Forest...


was with a man... I knew it...!
Huh?
Half an hour ago, Midori...

ハヤミ
スト
ゆ一五ーーー
ふふふ…

Yajiro...
the double-necked !?
SAHEIJI
IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR DAUGHTER AGAIN, COME TO HASE LAKE ALONE.
YAJIRO THE DOUBLE-NECKED





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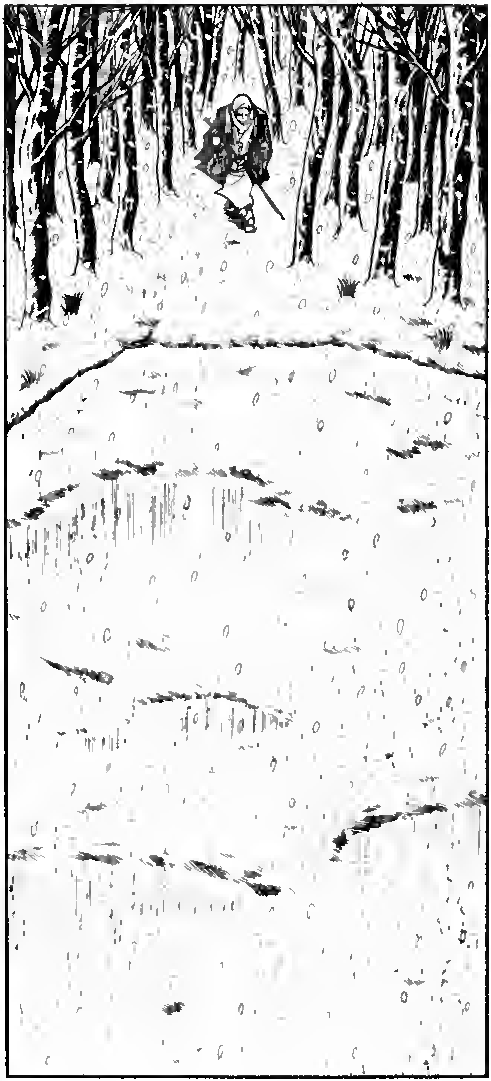
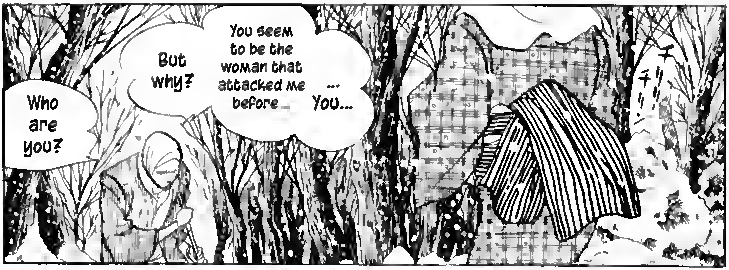
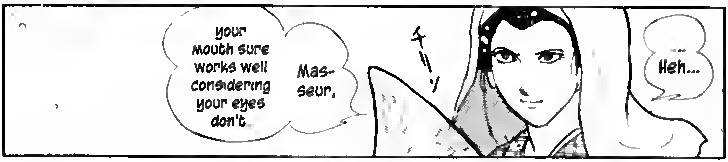
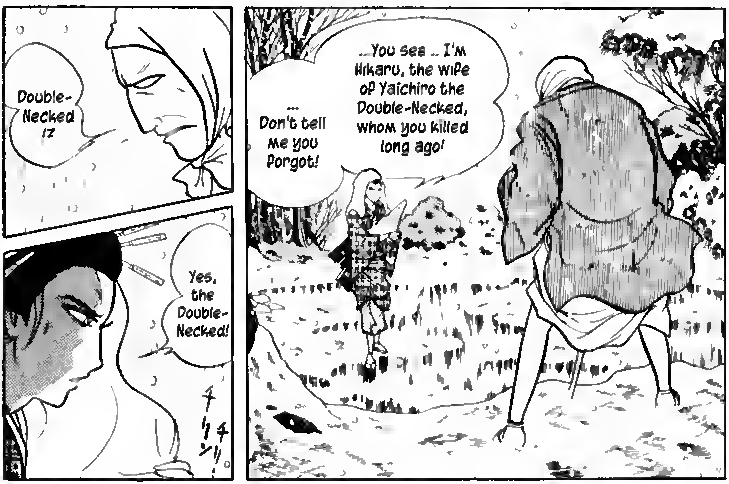
チリ…チリ



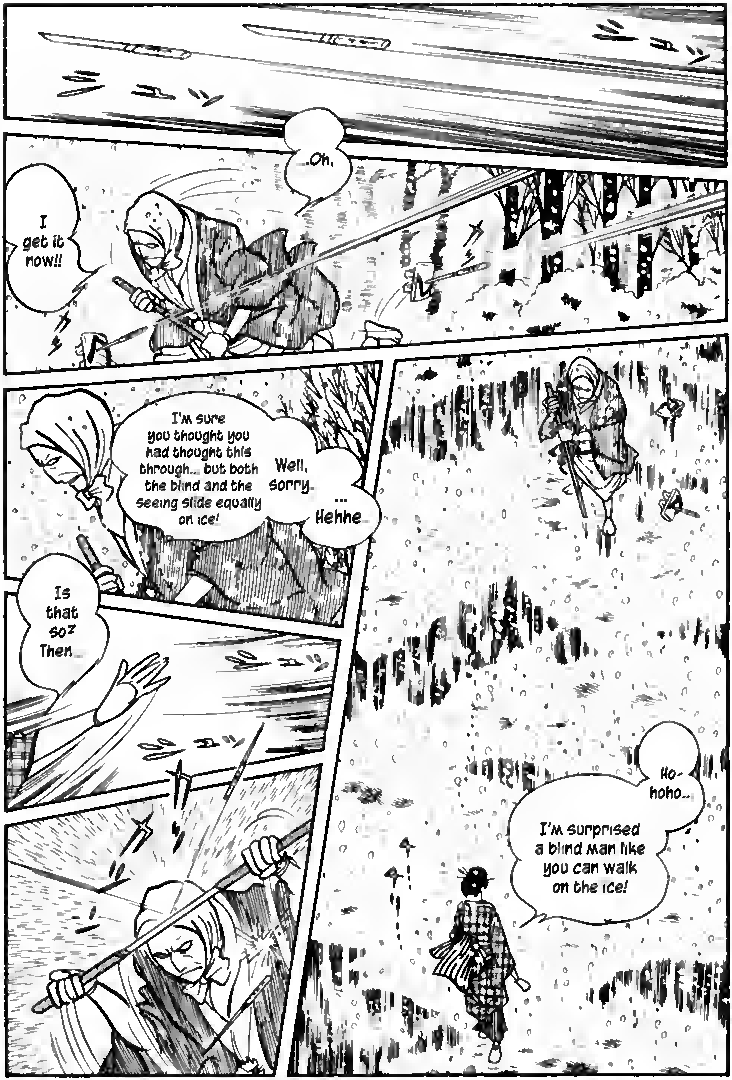

Who are you?
But why?
You seem to be the woman that attacked me before...
...You...

Or was that just a ploy to lure me out here?
really been kidnapped?
...Has Midori...

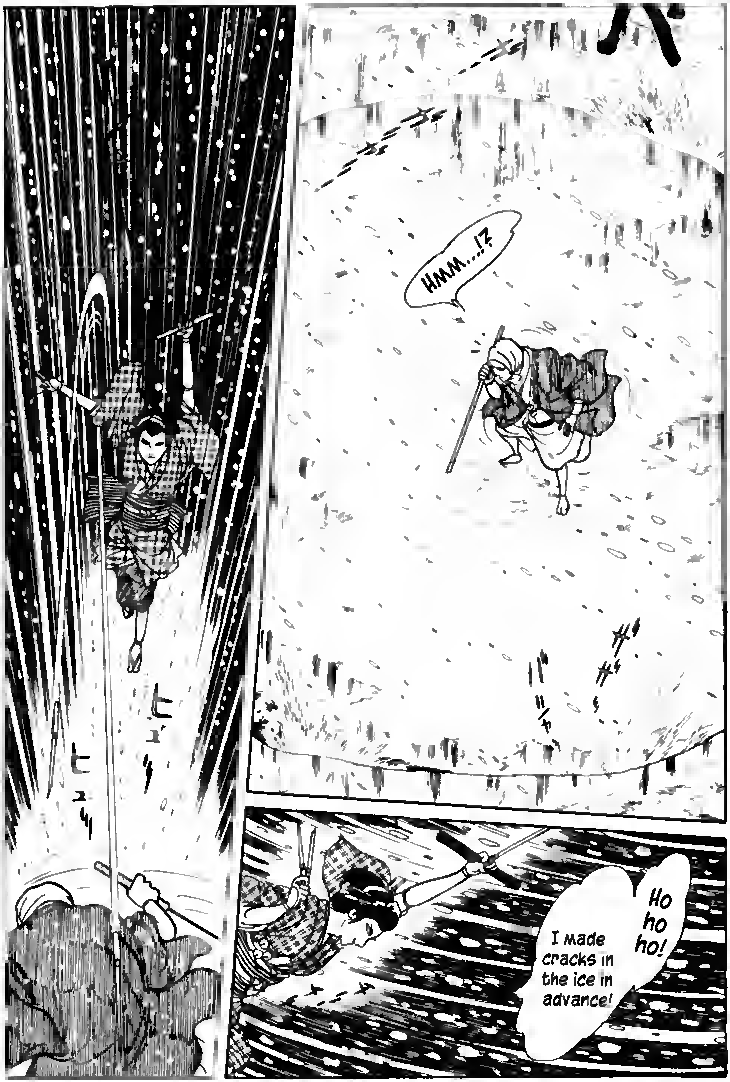

your mouth sure works well considering your eyes don't.
Masseur,
...Heh...

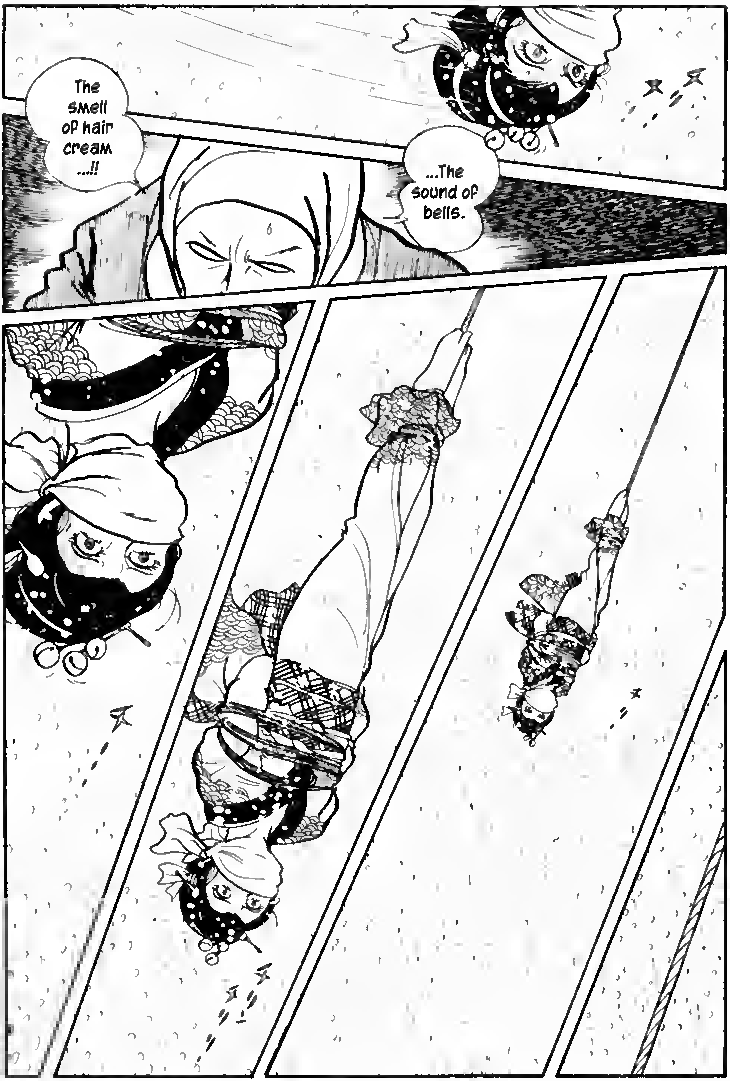

Double-Necked !?
Yes, the Double-Necked!
...You see... I'm Hikaru, the wife of Yaichiro the Double-Necked, whom you killed long ago!
... Don't tell me you forgot!

The twin thieves that caused an uproar in society under the nickname of the Double-Necked Yaichiro was the elder one.
They never killed anyone. They weren't even all that great thieves... but you slaughtered Yaichiro!
And...
the younger brother Yajiro...
was captured by Boss Saheiji and exiled...
and had finally been able to return on a remission boat...
But he still endured terrible suffering!
And with that said,
We've decided to pay a visit to you and to Saheiji!
Heh... I see.
Yajiro the Double-Necked...
returned on a re-Mission boat...
...
Hmpf!
Guess you're not alone!


I get it now!!
Oh.
I'm sure you thought you had thought this through... but both the blind and the seeing slide equally on ice!
Well, sorry...
Hehhe...
Is that so? Then...
Ho-hoho...
I'm surprised a blind man like you can walk on the ice!

Huh !?
You must allow me to take my leave!


HMM...!?
ヒュ
ヒュ
I made cracks in the ice in advance!
Ho ho ho!


The smell of hair cream ...!!
...The sound of bells.

Ichi!!
That's
!!
Midori
..
Ah!
Who's
he...!?
He's
not
Sah-
eiji!?

Isn't that Sabu the subordinate!?
But I thought he had been thrown in jail!
Heh..
You're dead wrong if you thought your little trick would work!
Yoshihei's body didn't bleed after I stabbed him!
Which means he'd been dead for some time..
ever since you killed him!!
Gyaaaaaah!
Kch..
H-How could you do this..!?

How dare you nearly make me kill Midori...!!
you bastards!!
Listen well!
...Your name was Hikari, wasn't it?
I didn't kill your husband Yaichiro.

He was dead by the time I got to him.
He was...
killed by his brother Yajiro!!
What did you say...!?
When we interrogated him,
He said something... like how he quarreled with his brother after remonstrating him for his evil deeds...
Kch!

S-Sis-ter, I...
had also Fallen. For you!!

「佐武と市」そして章さんのこと

小松　左京

よく、見てくださいました。――それに、よく、おたずねくださいました。石森の章さんの**『佐武と市捕物控』**、いいでしょう？

章さんとは、これでもう古いつきあいで、かれこれ十二、三年になりますか。ええ、もちろん章さんの作品、好きでほとんどみんな読んでます。あの人も、ＳＦが好きでＳＦものをたくさん書いてますし――そして妙な事なんだけど、ＳＦ作家ってのはまた、みんな漫画が好きで、漫画家としごく仲がいいんです。

そのうちの一つ二つ、私も解説なんか書かせてもらったもんですが、ＳＦものじゃないにしろ、私は章さんの作品の中で、この「佐武と市」が、いっち好きなんです。

脂がのりきった、と言うか、こう、一筋びーんと、はりつめたものがありましょう？

これは、たしか「ビッグコミック」っていう、日本ではじめての、ヤングむけ漫画劇画週刊誌に創刊号からのったと思うんですが、そりゃはじめのうちは、章さんもためらいがあったと見えて、背景はともかく、登場人物はちょっと児童漫画的に足ぶみしてたけど、二度目三度目から、もう自信をもって、ぐいとこの世界にのり出して来てねえ。お！章さん、やったなーってこっちもひきずりこまれちまいました。

何にひきずりこまれたかって？——野暮な事、お聞きなるもんじゃありませんや。絵柄、話、考証、描写……こんなものが、みんな一体になって、こう、ぴん、とはりつめ、しかも、しいんと人をひきこむものがありましょう。江戸噺……そう、死んだ伯龍の世話講釈、あるいは名人と言われた噺家たち誰それの人情話、そんな「いき」が出てやしませんか？

四季それぞれのたたずまいを見せる江戸の街、そして、今みたいに、冷暖房だエアコンだ、超高層だ地下街だってんじゃなくて、正月、春、夏、秋、年の瀬、との四季の息づかいを、じかに吸いながら生きていた、つい二・三代前の人たち……そう言った人たちの、生きた肌のぬくもりみたいなものが、この「絵草紙」から感じられやしませんか？

「捕物控」ってんですから、世間の裏の「闇」が舞台の、血なまぐさい、暗い話がほとんどです。配する主人公たちが、山里の故郷で陰惨な事件で父と姉を失い、江戸へ出て来て、痛風で動けない目明しの所で下っ引きをつとめる孤児の若者、それに仕込み杖をついて流しの按摩をやっているわけありらしい暗い顔付きの座頭——と来ては、どうもあんまりからっとした話になりそうにありません。

が——そのくらあく、どうしようもなく気のめいる話になりそうな所を　ふっと救ってくれるのは、章さんがその絵柄、構図のむこうに描き出してみせる、この時代の「生活感」と、それと不即不離になっている「季節感」じゃないでしょうか？

——どうしようもなく暗い、世間の裏の闇、人の心の無明の深淵をのぞきこみながら、

そんな暗さのすぐ傍で、裏長屋の人、浪人、町民、武家たち、そして「若い人たち」は、やっぱり、生きて行かなきゃならない。

「無常の闇」が深ければ深いほど、「業の深淵」が深ければ深いほど、そのすぐ傍で生きる若い命、ささやかな人生の、あえかさ、いじらしさが浮き上がる、と言うわけです。

――血みどろになって、凶悪な犯人が死ぬ。その血なまぐさい死体の傍で、ふと見上げると、江戸の空には、人の世の無明とかかわりなく赤とんぼがとび、秋がやって来ている。むせかえる血の臭いの連なりを、一瞬でもたちきる契機になる時、「季節のうつろい」もまた、「救い」の象徴になるんじゃないでしょうか？

こう言うところ、まったく「日本的」だねえ。ええ、だからいいんですよ。この作品は。

――日本の文芸なんてものは、このごろさっぱり「季節」てえものを忘れちまったみたいですがね。この作品は、日本の伝説的な精神風景の中にあった「季節」と言うものも独得の意味、役割りと言ったものを、思い出させてくれる所がある。

――小説でも、このごろは、こう言うのがすくなくなりましたね。

それを思うと「絵草子」だって、ばかにしたもんじゃ無いでしょうが。

ええ、そりゃおっしゃる通り「佐武と市」にはいくつか〝原型〟のようなものがあります。

――仕込み杖をさか手にひっこぬいて切りまくる按摩なんて、こりゃ勝シンさんの「座頭市」ですね。と言って、その座頭市の殺陣だって、そのもう一つ前は、黒沢明さんの映

画「椿三十郎」でしょう？三船と仲代の最後の決斗で、三船が左手で逆に刀をぬいたため、一瞬相手より早かった——なんて意表をつくシーンがありましたっけ。

……そう、映画と言えば、章さんのこの作品には、昔の時代劇映画の、それも、雨、雪、夜の町並みの俯瞰のシーンが、実にうまくとり入れられていますね。

山中定夫、伊丹万作から、黒沢明まで、かつての日本の時代劇映画の巨匠たちが、白黒スタンダードの画面でつかった、あの俯瞰……人物がたった一人小さく動いている長屋の上にふりしきる雨、あるいは遠くに夜まわりの提灯が動き、火の用心の声がきこえてくるだけの、夜の街のロングショット——。

ああ、言うのは、映画を見ている時は、ただ一種の「雰囲気」を出すためだけの事かと思ってたんですが、章さんにこうやって定着されてみると、これは志賀重昂さんの「日本風景論」じゃないが、日本人の「世界」のつかまえ方の中で、独特の、重い意味をもった「情感」につながってるんじゃないかって気がして来ます。

いえ、まだはっきり自分でも解き明かしてみたわけじゃなく、章さんの絵をにらんじゃ、考えてるとこなんですが……。

それと、この章さんの「佐武と市」の、もっともユニークな所は、劇画に思い切って大胆な、グラフィック処理を持ちこんだことなんだ。

こう、なんと言うか、グラフィック、ストーリーというか、——いや、グラフィック、

モンタージュと言った方がいいでしょう。

章さん、ふつうのストーリー漫画、劇画を描く一方、この実験は熱心にやっていた。一時、若い人たちの間で、評判になった「ジュン」と言うのがそれです。

これはまったく、章さんのグラフィックへの意欲を、ファンタジィの世界で存分に展開してみせたもので、そのかわり、ストーリーらしいものはありませんでした。

それだけの実験をやっておいて、今度は「捕物控」という「ストーリー劇画」の中に、その処理方法を大胆につっこんで来た。そして、みごとに成功、というわけです。ねえ、この「意欲」ってもの、大切だと思いませんか？

章さんって人は、不器用とは言わないまでも、それほど器用な人じゃないと思います。でも、とにかく「絵」が好きで、こうやったらどうだ、これではどうだって、工夫に工夫をかさねてうちこんでくるんですね。

だから、「佐武と市」だって連載がはじまってから、あれよあれよと言う間に、とにかく絵も内容も、すごくなっちまいました。プロってものは、これでなくちゃいけません。

――このごろの「おとなのまんが」と称する漫画の方は、絵が下手でもかまわない、大事なのは、アイデアだ。なんて言う人がいますが――でも、「うまくなろう」としない。何か必死で新しいものを「工夫しよう」としないで、アイデアのひねりばかりで「絵」そのものを追究しないマンガってのは、やっぱり妙なもんだね。

水木しげるさんの、あのおどろおどろしい幕場の「描きこみ」のように、何か「絵そのもの」でうならせてくれなくちゃ…。「画狂斎」じゃないが「絵師」が、「絵」に淫するぐらい工夫し、うちこんでくれなきゃ……、章さんには、それがあります。

たとえば、「めでたさも中位なり江戸の春」の冒頭の五ページ……特に「鴛替」の紹介と、その対抗ページの古風な百人一首の取り札の組合せ……そして最後のページで、ばらばらだった歌留多がきちんとならんでる、なんての——いいでしょう？

それから「長い雨」の冒頭見開き、画面のうんと下の方に、おしつぶされたように小さく江戸の家並みがならぶ上に、雨の直線を前に空で渦まく雲を「墨流し」であらわす——これ、これですよ。こう言う大胆な「工夫」で、見るものをうならせ、たのしませ、酔わせてくれなきゃ、プロと言えません。

ただね、今度のは、文庫でしょ？　ちょっと最初、週刊誌に出た時の効果や迫力が出るかどうか——でも、初めの時と、版元が同じですからね。

ま小さくても、章さんの「絵師」としての意欲と魅力、充分つたわると思います。

ま、じっくりたのしんでください。私も、もう一度たのしみます。秋の夜長、一ばいやりながら……何なら、あなたも一ばい、いかがですか？

佐武と市捕物控[3]　芒

小学館文庫

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代表作「サイボーグ009」「佐武と市捕物控」「ジュン」他。

（検印廃止）

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佐武と市捕物控

SABU & ICHI

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